How to Develop a Lesson Plan

How do I create one?
A lesson plan incorporates learning principles and strategies to ensure that the learning objectives are met and essentially provides an agenda for the instructor. EOD has created a Lesson Plan Template for your use. It is meant to be filled out as you read this article. You may also download the Lesson Plan Example to see one that is already completed.

The elements of a lesson plan will include:

- Course information
- Audience (Who is this for?)
- Objectives (What do the participants need to be able to do/know?)
- Purpose (Why is this training important?)
- Materials (What will I need?)
- Assessment strategies
- Participant engagement methods
- Training outline (The training content with activities and feedback integrated)
- Closure (Instructor restates the objectives and the participants reflect and evaluate training)
- Participant evaluation (Participants evaluate the quality of the training)
- Instructor Reflection (Instructor reflects on how the training went to determine points of refinement)

Course information
The course information includes:

- Course title
- Instructor
- Start/end date(s) and time(s)
- Location
**Audience**
Your audience is defined in the Plan phase and you include this in the lesson plan. It is important to analyze your audience for your training so you can ensure the information is at the appropriate level and relevant for them.

- Who is this training for?
- How many people need it?
- Why do they need it?
- Where are they located?
- What is their comprehension level?
- How could they access it?

**Objectives**
Your content will be built around your objectives and should have been determined in the Plan phase (Planning Worksheet). A well written objective will have a task, condition and criteria. In other words, what do you want the participant to do, how will the participant be able to do it, and how well will the task be done? (Clark, 2010)

Example Objective:

*After the training, you will be able to identify with 100% accuracy (criteria) the proper handling of chemicals (task) reading the material safety data sheets (condition).*

The objectives should be stated to the participants in the training.

**Purpose**
Participants want to know how the training will be helpful to them. Why is it important they master the objectives of this training? Is it because of a law? Will it help them improve in an area of their job? Is it for their personal safety or health? Verbally state this in the training.

**Materials**
Make a list of what materials will be needed for the training. This includes things like a projector, laptop computer, overhead, sticky notes and markers, etc. Pretend that someone that has never taught the training before is given your lesson plan; would he/she have everything they need based on this list? It is helpful if you add to the list as you design your training. This is also a helpful checklist for you.

**Assessment strategies**
As an instructor, you want to continually assess the participants’ level of understanding. You are looking for indicators that the participants may need more reinforcement or they may already know the information and need to move on. This can be done formally and informally, but should be done at least after each objective or section has been covered. In your lesson plan, list the assessment strategies you intend to use and describe them in detail in the training outline.
Ways to assess understanding:

- **Participation engagement methods**-mentioned later
- **Questioning**- ask open-ended questions that would promote a higher level of thinking. For example, “Describe how this topic will apply to you in your job.” “How does this change your previous thoughts on this subject?” “What do you feel is the most important take-away?” “What questions do you still have about this topic?”
- **Quizzes/Tests**-more formal ways to check for understanding; mini-quizzes are good for a training session that have more than one session to recall information and do not have to be graded
- **Surveys**-asking questions that may indicate misconceptions within the group

**Participant engagement methods**

Ideally, each objective or section should have some sort of activity that reinforces the concept. The following are strategies that instructors can use to increase learner engagement. These activities are based on adult learning principles; adults like to draw meaning from their experiences and they like to practice their new skills immediately (Post). These strategies are also useful to you, the instructor, in determining the participants’ level of understanding. In your lesson plan, list the participant engagement methods you intend to use and describe them in detail in the training outline.

Below are some examples of active participation methods:

- **Case study**-pairs or groups read a case study and apply what they just learned to determine the course of action
- **Think/Pair/Share**-participants are divided into groups, the instructor poses the same question to all groups or different questions to each group, think time is given, then everyone in the group shares their answers or opinions
- **Role play**-participants act out a situation
- **Action plans**-groups that work together come up with an action plan to improve a process, or individuals create an action plan on how to improve a personal process or action
- **Personal goal sheet**-individuals create goals to improve a skill
- **Problem-solving/scenarios**-common problems related to the content are given to groups or pairs to discuss and determine how to solve them
- **Questioning**- close ended questions produce one or two correct answers which have a place in learning, particularly in technical trainings, but strive to think of open-ended questions to ask, and include these in your lesson plan. Open-ended questions can produce an array of answers and invoke deeper levels of thought to produce an answer. For example, “What has been your experience?” “What do you think?” “How is this different than the current process?”
**Training outline**

The content is the heart of the training, and was defined in your script. Think of it as an agenda or a checklist. Some instructors are very detailed and others like to only include the key highlights. When you first begin, it might be helpful to be as detailed as possible.

Include the following items in your training outline:

- introduction
- attention-grabber
- content
- detailed explanation of the participant engagement methods chosen (what and when)
- detailed explanation of the assessment strategies chosen (what and when)
- ways to cater to multiple learning styles (i.e., auditory, visual and kinesthetic)
- instructor notes
- enrichment

Your content might lend itself to be more of a lecture style, but the more you can think of activities where the participants are involved and engaged, the more likely the participants will be able to internalize and remember the training. The following briefly describes each component that should be considered as you outline your content.

- **Introduction**
  
  A responsibility of the trainer is to ensure the classroom is a safe environment in which to learn. If participants don’t feel comfortable or their immediate needs are not met, they are less likely to be engaged. At the beginning of the training, establish the classroom norms; are there specific times for breaks or can participants take breaks at their own leisure? Where are the restrooms? Can participants use their cell phones? Where would they exit the building in the event of an evacuation? Can they ask questions while you are presenting or should they wait until a break or the end of class? Can they bring food and drinks into the classroom?

  Another way to make participants feel comfortable is to do an icebreaker activity. They do not have to be long or elaborate, but they provide a way for participants to get to know each other and perhaps find something they have in common. This is helpful if there are going to be any group activities in the training. Although it might be harder to conduct an icebreaker in large groups, it can be done with a few modifications.
• **Attention-grabber**
  The attention-grabber is a short and simple activity completed near the beginning of the training that is designed to:

  - spur the participants’ interest about the topic
  - provide an opportunity for participants to share what they already know
  - demonstrate why meeting the objectives of the training will be important to the participants

  The attention-grabber is done before any content is presented. The benefit of the attention-grabber is that not only does it engage your participants, but it also is an opportunity for you, the instructor, to gauge what participants already know about the topic.

  Examples of attention-grabbers:

  - **Give participants a problem or scenario** to figure out with minimal instructions – a problem/scenario they might encounter that would prove the training helpful
  - **Pose a question** for participants to discuss in small groups or pairs, then share their answers with the group (e.g., what do you hope to get out of the training? What do you already know about the topic?)
  - **A short pretest**, informal or formal
  - **True/false question and answer session** with popular misconceptions related to the topic

• **Content**
  Use the content that was defined in your script. In general, remember to introduce each section of content by explaining which objective it pertains to. In addition, summarize each section before moving to the next.

• **Detailed explanation of the participant engagement methods chosen**
  If you are using the Lesson Plan Template, you have already defined what participant engagement methods you are going to use. In the training outline, explain when the participant engagement activities will occur, details on how to do the activity, and the instructions you are going to give to the participants.

• **Detailed explanation of the assessment strategies chosen**
  If you are using the Lesson Plan Template, you have already defined what strategies you are going to use. In the training outline, explain when the assessments will occur, include a detailed explanation of how, and the instructions you are going to give to the participants. If it is a test or quiz, attach a copy to your lesson plan.
• **Learning styles**  
People have different preferences in how they learn, which simply means that instructors should provide the content in multiple ways to increase effectiveness. This means including ways to target multiple senses in the lesson plan: auditory, visual and kinesthetic.

Consider incorporating the following where appropriate:

- Videos (audio/visual)
- Podcasts (audio)
- Regular and brief breaks (kinesthetic)
- Making/doing (kinesthetic)
- Sorting activity (kinesthetic)
- Graphic organizers (visual)
- Handouts (visual)
- Mnemonics (visual)
- Charts (visual)

• **Instructor notes**  
Write notes about how you will present the material and when you will use your various methods and instructional aids. For example,

- "Refer to page ___ in your handout."
- "Facilitate discussion."
- "Do the activity on page ___."  
- “Show flowchart.”

• **Enrichment**  
Enrichment opportunities should be available if there are participants that have demonstrated that they already meet the objectives of the training. It can be as simple as having them lead a group to assist others or as broad as an independent project or problem related to the topic to research. It may be that the participants share with you a specific topic or skill they would like more information about.
Closure
This is one of the most important parts of the training and it is often dismissed or instructors run out of time. This is the part where the participants are able to take what they learned and relate it back to the objectives. In this part of the training, allow some time for participants to reflect on what they learned, ask questions and/or evaluate how they can apply what they just learned when they return to their jobs.

Examples:

- Participants write down and share their goals as a result of the training.
- Participants share something new that they learned and how they will apply what they learned in their job.
- Participants are put in groups or pairs and are asked to determine the three most important takeaways of the training.

Participant evaluation
A helpful way to determine what needs to be refined in the training is to provide a survey to participants at the end of the training to receive feedback. For a tips on creating a training evaluation and some examples, please visit http://www.servicegrowth.net/documents/10%20Tips%20on%20Creating%20Training%20Evaluation%20Forms.net.pdf

Instructor reflection
After the training, reflect on what worked well and what needs refining:

Things to consider:

- How was the class environment? Should you choose a different location?
- Was the content too easy/advanced for the audience?
- How was the pacing, fast/slow?
- Think of the questions the participants asked; could activities or content need some clarification?
- What worked well? What didn’t?
- Use the student evaluations to help you

It is best to make refinements shortly after the training while it is still fresh in your mind, but if you don’t have time to make the refinements, do take the time to write them down so you can refer to them at a later time.
Additional resources:
Teaching Adults:
- What Every Trainer Needs to Know About Adult Learning Styles
  [http://www.fastfamilysupport.org/fasttraining/Other/teachingadults-whattrainersneedtobeknow.pdf](http://www.fastfamilysupport.org/fasttraining/Other/teachingadults-whattrainersneedtobeknow.pdf)

Summary of Training Techniques:
- [http://www.inquiry.net/adult/trainer/techniques.htm](http://www.inquiry.net/adult/trainer/techniques.htm)

Examples of lesson plans:
- [http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/taesp/guide08/4lptemplate.html](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/taesp/guide08/4lptemplate.html)

How to write objectives with examples:

Icebreaker Suggestions:

Learning styles:

Question examples and stems:
- The six levels of questioning using Bloom’s Taxonomy:
- Developing Questioning Skills, Levels of Questioning: An Exercise:
  [http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/question2.html](http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/question2.html)

Informal Assessment Techniques:

Works cited