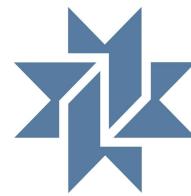


How to Plan Classes and Presentations



DENVER
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Library staff learn tools and strategies to design, plan, and deliver effective classes and/or presentations.

Learning Objectives

At the end of class, the student will:

- Understand the value of identifying objectives and outcomes
- Be able to design a class, workshop, or presentation using a lesson plan
- Have instructional strategies to use in future presentations

Lesson Prep Work

(15-30 min, before live session)

- Get in early to test for technology failure, because it will happen :-)
- Test audio, microphone, and volume
- Pre-load [slides](#)

Session Outline

This lesson is completed in one (60) minute virtual session

(5) Introduction

- As students enter the classroom, have them introduce themselves in the chat. Ask what they are hoping to learn today.
While you can do this before your session formally begins, spend a few minutes at the start to give everyone the opportunity to introduce themselves.
You can use the information people share about why they are attending or what they hope to learn to adapt your content later on to customize for them, increasing student engagement.
Having a welcoming activity gets people in the mindset of learning and gives a buffer for people coming in late. Additionally, everyone in the room gets a chance to talk, know each other, relax, and we've provided an opportunity for people to feel a sense of community
- Share the link to this lesson plan (<https://bit.ly/HowToPlanLP>) so students can follow along

When this class is taught in person to library staff, the lesson plan is the only formal handout. It is helpful to compare what gets documented in the lesson plan versus what is presented in person and to see how the slides complement the content.

- Introduce instructor
By taking the time to introduce yourself, explain your background and motivations, you build rapport with your audience. It shows you're a real person and lets you explain why you care about the topic at hand
- COVID CAVEAT: There are some things that are uncertain right now and that are difficult to plan for. This class was designed before library closures, social distancing, or any indication of the pandemic to come. The topics we are going to discuss are general enough that hopefully they will apply to any future we go back to that involves classes and presentations.

(5-10) Setting the Tone for the Session

POLL: Use the hand-raising feature in Adobe Connect or pre-create a poll to ask attendees to share their level of experience with teaching and/or presenting

- Frame today's class by dispelling a myth:
 - No one is born a great teacher. Teaching or presenting are just skills that you develop through practice. The more you do it, the better you'll be. Sometimes when you're just starting it might not be great, but it will get better. You just have to jump in!
 - Try looking for informal teaching opportunities, volunteer to do a webinar, show a friend how to do something.
 - Watch how other people teach, observe, and synthesize. Maybe they have a great way to get class started, or a good metaphor you can reuse. Seeing other people teach also helps to clarify your own personal style.
 - There are loads of lesson plans and curriculum that already exist. Research, read, and remember you don't have to reinvent the wheel!
- Today's ultimate goal is everyone feels confident and prepared to plan their next class, workshop, or presentation.
- Explain the overall flow for today's class

Remind everyone that they can follow along with the lesson plan to see the class in action, comparing what's on the page and what we're doing together.

- We just set a roadmap for the session. Being clear about your goals for the class at the beginning - and stating them explicitly to the class - as well as covering how you're going to achieve those goals, sets the boundaries for what will and will not be discussed in class, lets participants identify if they're in the right place or not - and provides a less awkward exit point for them if they're in the wrong place, and having the end goals in mind, makes it easier for learners to make their way through frustrating/less engaging parts, because they have a clear idea of where they're heading.

(15-20) How to Lesson Plan

- Keep in mind that a lesson plan is a living document. You will start just documenting your ideas, making edits and improvements, and regularly updating your plan as you teach your class and/or as new developments are made in your topic of choice
- The basic recipe for lesson planning is:
 - Learn: approach the subject matter as a learner, documenting your steps
 - Write: set your learning objectives, structure your lesson and write it down
 - Edit: get other eyes on it, evaluate it
 - Teach!
- Selecting Topics
 - Make sure that whatever you choose is contemporary, useful, and reflects the needs and interests of your audience.
 - Try and choose subjects that can be revisited or delivered multiple times rather than one-off singular experiences.
 - Ensure that your topic and your approach resonate with your community and you as the instructor
 - But don't just pick topics only because they are interesting to you or because "it's what we've always done"
- Goal-oriented design
 - Goals have to be something specific that you can measure ("Students will know Excel" vs "Students will make a simple budget with Excel")
 - Frame things with verbs (i.e. "Students will understand...", "Students can demonstrate...", etc)
 - Sweet spot is 3 goals, no more than 5
 - Try and have these be something relevant to real-life
 - Ask yourself "After students leave, how will their lives be impacted?"
 - Really take the time to think about your audience when designing your goals. Are they culturally appropriate? Developmentally appropriate? Realistic for the time you have together? Have you made any assumptions about what your students already know?
 - Find a place in your session to clearly state the goals to attendees. Ideally you should do this twice - once at the beginning to lay a roadmap, then at the end to consolidate/name what's been learned
- Universal Design
 - Making things accessible for all learners and making learning equitable
 - Repeating the same information in a variety of ways to meet different learning styles
 - Planning for scaffolded activities so that everyone has a chance to try something out, regardless of their expertise/tech skills/mobility
 - EXAMPLES:
 - For a workshop where you want to teach 3D Modeling, instead of just throwing everyone in front of a computer and expecting them to just understand what the software does, spend time allowing students to try drawing out a shape on paper, building it with clay, and THEN progressing

- towards using a computer so that they have a foundational knowledge of 3D objects before you dive into software
- In a session on creating a budget in Excel, you have to get everyone familiar with how rows and columns work, how the SUM function works, what a budget is, and how you'll go about entering all that information BEFORE you expect students to just start plugging numbers in
 - (Also notice that the students weren't just handed a finished budget and expected to understand it just by seeing it. We built it together)
- Give lots of options and plan to be flexible, every student and every class is different
- Why bother making a lesson plan at all?
 - Lesson planning is also a chance to think through what could go wrong. Not every tiny "what if" has to make it to your final lesson plan but consider:
 - What if technology doesn't cooperate? Can you teach without it?
 - What if students get off-topic? Do you have a way to get folks back on task?
 - What if someone isn't grasping a concept? Do you have another explanation, metaphor, or activity to try?
 - What if an activity goes over on time?
 - The true worst case scenario though is that no one shows up to a session you've put hard work into

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: Let's say that this happens to you, and no one shows up for your workshop/class/presentation. It's easy to think "that was a waste of time," but what are the positives to you spending the time planning?

Have people respond in the chat. Make sure you wait 20-30 seconds before prompting the class for responses, even if they're quiet. As a presenter it may feel like you are waiting for a very long time, but keep a count in your head. If you have relationships built out with your students, you can also call on someone who you know might have some expertise or knowledge. Use the bullets below as prompts if there are crickets, or as a reference if anything gets skipped

- It can seem like extra work, but it helps you:
 - Organize your thoughts
 - Refine down to what is necessary
 - Document for future use, for you personally or for your colleagues to use (and saving them the work of having to build from scratch)
 - Make it easier to have someone else review
 - Keep your objectives in mind
 - Have a concrete way to document your lessons learned as you teach, update, revise, teach again, update again....
 - Having a lesson plan to refer back to also means that you don't have to memorize a presentation or know every single tiny detail about your topic
 - Document for future use, for you personally or for your colleagues to use (and saving them the work of having to build from scratch)

*What we just did was set **context**. A key part of engaging learning experiences is helping create the context for your learners about why they should learn what's on the table that day, and what the possibilities are if they master this skill. If your learners are unable to tie the skill you're sharing directly to their life, they'll lack motivation to participate and continue learning more.*

(5) Tips for Success

- Have an outline with times (and maybe print it out)
- Be thoughtful about what you can realistically do in the time you have
 - Build in cushion time (i.e. Plan 50 minutes of content for a 60 min. session) and/or design more material than you need and have options in case the class runs fast (because you talked very quickly or because the class was very advanced)
 - Basically, you won't actually know how much time it will take until you've practiced many times
- What visual cues can you use to keep your audience engaged? A demonstration? Slides? A Handout?
 - Note on presentation design: keep slides SIMPLE! No wall of text! But use notes if you want them
- Design as many activities as you can - avoid lectures
 - Think about how to bookend your presentations - introductory and conclusion activities
- Practice with someone else
- Other people review your lesson plan and slides
 - You should also be revisiting and editing your plans after with what you learned through teaching so that you don't make the same mistakes next time

(10-15) Practice Making a Lesson Plan and Teaching Activity

- We're going to practice together to test this process out. Let's create a lesson plan for a presentation that you would give someone who is brand new and has just started at the library. You'll need either a scrap piece of paper to take notes or another tab or app open to be typing.

*Keep times **TIGHT** on this so that you have enough time in the end to do a meaningful reflection.*

- STEP ONE: GOALS
 - Decide whether you want to tell someone about your job specifically, your team/department, or just about the library generally in **1 minute**
 - Think about what you want them to take away, and how that will make their lives or jobs easier
 - Write it down in just a few bullet points
- STEP TWO: CONTENT CHOICES

- In **1 minutes**, jot down all of your ideas and get out every possible aspect of your topic
Set a timer and hold people to it
- Take **30 seconds - 1 minute** to organize your ideas and throw out anything that you can already tell is unnecessary
- In **1-2 minutes** (*or less pending time*) prioritize your ideas.

If you were taking this class in person, you would be presenting for a minute or less, so you would have to be judicious about what content is the absolute most important.

Sometimes ordering things in terms of what you'd do in 30 minutes, 15, 10, 5, 1, etc. can help if you're struggling to decide what to keep and what to cut

- Take a minute to reflect on WHY you picked what you did, make sure that it supports your overall goals of what you would want the student(s) to get out of it
- Draft a basic plan of what your lesson will cover

- **STEP THREE: DESIGN ACTIVITIES**

- Is there a way that you could cover your content with an activity? Could students be trying something out together? Is there room for discussion?
- For today this is more of a hypothetical. You think of what you WOULD do if we had more time.
- Will your activity work for someone who isn't a native English speaker? If they have mobility challenges? If you were presenting to a very large audience? If you were presenting online?

- **STEP FOUR: SUMMARIZE WITH VISUALS**

- What would help your learners reach the goals you set earlier? Do you need a visual demonstration? An example? A handout? A video? Slides?
- Consider though whether or not your presentation *needs* slides, and how to pare down the information presented in slides so that you aren't just making walls of text or have a script written out that you just plan to read
- With paper, markers, pens, draw out a rough draft of what your slide could look like

- **STEP FIVE: EXTERNAL REVIEW**

- Today this is hypothetical. If we were in person, you would swap slides and notes with the person next to you, read through their content, talk through lessons with each other, ask questions, and make suggestions for changes and improvements.
- This can sometimes not feel super comfortable, but it is important and will really make a huge difference in the quality of your content

- **STEP SIX: ITERATE**

- If we were in person, I would have you make any necessary edits based on the conversation you had with your partner

- **STEP SEVEN: TRY IT OUT**

The first time you deliver a presentation or teach a class, you'll discover things you'll want to change or do differently if you were to do it again. This is totally normal and just part of the process. The more you practice, the better you'll be.

- If we were in person, everyone would get 30-60 to present their lesson to the group. Since we are not, your homework is to find a friend, family member, or a colleague and have them be your test audience. Get their feedback, and take notes on what you would change

Remember that the act of teaching is itself a lesson. Trying it out, and learning from the experience is a critical part of lesson planning. Your lesson plan isn't done just because the class was taught once. Think of it as a living document

(5) Reflections/Conclusions

Taking time to reflect is useful for learning, and building it in after an activity can be particularly impactful. Reflection should also be part of your learning process as a teacher or presenter, always take time to think through your experience of what went well, what could have been better, and what you learned.

- Ask students to provide feedback via chat
 - If you were to teach THIS class, what would you change?
- Provide time for quiet self-reflection

Options: have them write it down, just sit quietly, or share with their neighbor. Alter this to fit your group's size or energy.

- What did you learn from presenting?
- What would you change if you had more time?
- What have you learned that you could apply to your next project?

Links

- More on [Universal Design for Learning](#)
- Original [In-Person Lesson Plan](#)