

Lesson Planning

Version 8

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“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” — Benjamin Franklin

Inadequate planning for your classes typically leads to wasted class time, inability to achieve the required learning objectives for the class, and possible student frustration.

Backward design approach

Just a reminder, a backward design is recommended to plan your lessons and classes. In case you skipped straight to this section and bypassed the other pages, it is suggested that you plan with the end in mind. So start with figuring out the learning outcomes you would like your students to achieve in the course(s) you are teaching, then plan how you will assess their achievement of the learning outcomes, and lastly plan the weekly content, deciding on which engagement activities and technology would work best for you and your students. For a review on how to use the backward design approach and its advantages, please click on [Assessing Learning](#) to take you to that page.

This page addresses how to effectively plan teaching and learning activities for your classes for every lesson. After completing this page you will be able to:

- Explain the rationale for lesson planning in education.
- Describe the context for lesson planning within curriculum development.
- Create a detailed lesson plan for one of your classes.

Which of these statements reflect something that has happened to you at some point in your teaching career? (Choose as many as apply.)

1. An in-class activity did not go as planned.
2. Once in a class I realized I was missing a resource which might have been helpful.
3. The class didn't feel like it went particularly smoothly. Students seemed distracted or confused.
4. I could have improved upon the sequencing of topics in my class.

5. I ran out of time to do the final activity I had planned for a class.
6. I ran out of time in a class to cover all the content I had hoped to cover
7. I would teach things differently the next time I covered that material

Us, too! To avoid these problems, and several others not on our list, we recommend creating formal lesson plans.

A lesson is an organized set of activities designed to present one manageable sized piece of your course.

Don't confuse lesson with lecture, lab, or class. You may have more than one lesson in a 50 minute lecture / lab / class. And of course, a lecture is just one teaching technique that you might use in a lesson.

A lesson plan is a description of how the teacher and the students will accomplish the intended learning. The lesson plan serves as a guide for the teacher focusing on the identification and relationship between:

- What is to be learned.
- Learning activities to help learners achieve the expected learning.
- Resources that will support the learning.
- Assessment and evaluation strategies and tools.

Recommended resource

is highly recommended for those who wish to review how to create course learning outcomes.

Summary

Lesson plans are descriptions of how both instructors and students will accomplish the intended learning for a particular lesson. Lesson planning is an important part of the curriculum development process. Lesson plans define the goals, techniques, assessments and resources (time, materials, etc) required to achieve and measure the desired learning.

Lesson plans help to keep a class focused, making effective use of limited class time in order to achieve the learning goals. Moreover, the structure of lesson plans helps ensure that appropriate activities are planned and that resources required for those activities are identified in advance.

Lesson planning embodies the spirit of student centered learning. It helps ensure

that students are provided with a well-organized lesson with the time and resources they need to achieve the required learning.

Now you are ready to put everything together and plan a lesson.

First, read through your course outline and your weekly addendum. Become familiar with the learning outcomes for the course and the weekly learning outcomes.

When reviewing these topics, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the core concepts?
- What is the essential material, and what is the optional material?
- What are the key points and general themes?
- Who are my students?
- What material do I expect my students will find difficult to understand?
- What are some real world connections that I can use to help students learn?
- How is this material connected with previous lessons?
- Is there important material that is not addressed in the readings?
- What are some key examples and illustrations?
- What material will be most useful/interesting/relevant to students?

Answering these key questions will help you decide how to plan your lessons.

Second, start planning how you will assess your students' achievement of the learning outcomes.

Third, after you have planned how you will assess your students' learning outcomes, plan how you will engage your students. How will you spark their interest each week, and what activities will you use to generate class discussions or class group work? How will you assess your students' understanding of what was taught that week?

You may want to select some tips that you found helpful from the previous pages and that you'd like to implement in the class.

Please use the [Lesson Plan Template \(.docx\)](#) to plan how you will organize a class you will teach in one of your courses.

On a final note, according to Gamson and Chickering (1987), there are 7 Elements to Good Undergraduate Teaching. A good professor:

1. Encourages student-faculty contact (Especially contact focused on the learning agenda)
2. Develops cooperation among students (In order to help them learn to work effectively with others.)
3. Encourages active learning (By promoting thinking, doing, and thinking about what they are doing.)
4. Gives prompt feedback (And helps students figure out how to use that feedback to improve performance.)
5. Emphasizes time on task (And provides lots of productive, guided, deliberate practice.)
6. Communicates high expectations (And encourages students to have high self-expectations.)
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning (And engenders respect for intellectual diversity.)

Slightly adapted by Tom Angelo from the principles originally proposed in:
Gamson, Z. & Chickering, A. (March 1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 5-10. (Downloaded from <http://www.lonestar.edu/multimedia/SevenPrinciples.pdf>)

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