

## Lesson Planning

### STEP ONE - Collect Background Information

Begin the lesson planning process by gathering some basic information. This will help you to write your plan much more easily.

**Title of lesson:** For instance, Introduction to PMC, Art Clay taster. What are the aims of the lesson?

**Desired learning outcomes:**

What would you like participants to know or be able to do at the conclusion of the session? This is vital. You need to identify the specific skills, knowledge and abilities you want your students to develop so that they get value from the lesson.

**Desired process objectives:**

What would you like participants to experience during the session? Consider the physical and emotional experiences you want your students to have. How do you want them to feel at the end of the session? What projects or activities would be appropriate to achieve the learning outcomes? How will you include all the learning styles in your training?

**Prerequisites:**

What competencies or background experience should students bring to this session? How will you evaluate these? For more advanced training, you will need to ensure that students have the basic skills so will you insist that they have done your basic course or use some other form of evaluation?

**Participants:**

Who will be your learners? What might be their characteristics, e.g., age range, gender mix, learning styles, previous experience, physical restrictions, learning difficulties etc. How will these things affect the structure and format of the training?

**Physical and organisational setting in which the training will take place:**

Do you have premises or are you running this in some other venue? Are you going into an organisation to run this? What impact will this have on the structure, content and format of the training?

**Timing and pacing, time based logistics:**

Is this a half day taster, an evening demonstration or a full week course? Can you get into your venue early to set up? Will you have to take everything away overnight? How long does each element take? How can you ensure students have enough time/ are not bored or waiting?

**Materials required:**

Resources, audio-visual material, handouts, tools etc

**Room setup and equipment needed:**

Do you need to take your kiln with you or are you going to torch fire? What are the practical considerations of this? Will you have to carry heavy equipment around? What are the health and safety considerations? How many people can you train safely? Do you have sufficient tools for everyone? Can you use an open flame in the venue?

### STEP TWO - Draft a detailed, minute-by-minute plan

Think carefully about how long each element takes and then add some extra time. Things tend to take longer than you think. Make sure you have a stretching exercise for students who work fast and ensure that the slowest student can complete the tasks within the time given without feeling pressured or slow. You should have a clear idea of how you will achieve the learning objectives with each plan element. The lesson plan should show which learning objective will be achieved by each section.

### **Teaching style**

What specific teaching styles will you use? Are demonstrations, examples or written handouts needed to deliver the learning outcomes? How much time will you be delivering information to students and does this balance well with the student activity time? Have you considered all learning styles in your plan? Is there plenty of time for students to ask questions and have some of your personal attention?

### **STEP THREE – Evaluate the lesson after delivery**

You should evaluate each lesson at the end focussing on your lesson plan and the achievement of your objectives. Good teachers are always looking for ways to improve. It's useful to reflect on each class and evaluate what went well and what you could do even better next time. Even in the best planned classes, things can happen which you never expected, particularly if you're running public training where students are unknown quantities until they arrive.

It's useful to evaluate the timings and make changes depending on the practical experience. The way students responded to your projects and how successful their final pieces turned out will give you valuable information about their suitability for other students. It's always useful to ask for feedback from students at the end of training. This will give you constructive information to improve your training in future. Always be willing to learn from experience and feedback.

### **Basic tips on lesson planning**

- The lesson should be planned to achieve the objectives
- The purpose of the lesson should be clear to students
- Final practise of skills and abilities should be as realistic as possible
- The lesson should be logically structured
- There should be a variety of student activities and teaching methods
- On the whole students should be active, not passive
- The plan should suit the characteristics of the students
- Teacher talk should be illustrated with visual resources where possible
- Most activities will take much longer than you expect
- Have a stretching activity for students who finish an activity early or use open ended activities which always provide something for everyone to do
- Always prepare too much; there is nothing worse than running out of material. Preparation time is rarely wasted, there is always the next lesson
- Don't forget that activities can go on in series or in parallel, in different groups or using different equipment

### **Further Reading**

Petty, G (2004) Teaching Today 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Nelson Thornes Cheltenham