

Lesson Planning

SLIDE 1: Wouldn't it be great to have someone tell you that you have to deliver a training presentation tomorrow and you come to find out there's no lesson plan? Probably not, right? Lesson plans are critical to successful training presentations.

SLIDE 2: But why? Well, according to Trainer Basics by ASTD Press, "A good lesson plan tells a classroom trainer everything needed to conduct a class successfully." Think of the lesson plan like a road map; without it there is no telling where you and your students might end up at the end of a lesson.

SLIDE 3: Lesson plans help keep instructors organized and on time, not to mention they become very useful in the event the primary instructor cannot deliver the lesson. Lesson plans are also critical to training standardization. Meaning, when the lesson plan is used (or followed) the training presentation is delivered the same way each and every time it is delivered. This is an important concept considering the lesson plan should follow the intended course design whereby the content and associated exercises link to targeted course and lesson objectives; not to mention the lesson is delivered to the participants time and time again in exactly the same way. Finally, lesson plans certainly help to make delivering the lesson a more comfortable proposition for the instructor. Hello, my name is Kerry Kinslow and I'm an instructional system specialist here at the National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona. I have over 20-years of training related experience from both the United States Air Force and BLM, in and out of the classroom. Today I'm going to talk to you about Lesson Planning. Having said that, let's take a look at the objective of this training presentation.

SLIDE 4: By the end of this lesson you should be able to: Given a sample lesson plan, determine if it has all the required components based on the minimum criteria specified in the NTC Lesson Plan Evaluation Checklist & Guidelines. Now that you know what our objective is, let's take a look at what we'll be covering to get you to that objective.

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SLIDE 5: The first thing that we're going to take a look at is the structure of a lesson plan, which contains four major components. When we're done looking at those components, we're going to take a look at the specific pieces (the elements) that are within each of those major components. After each component, we will take a look at an example lesson plan that will allow you to get a feel for what each major section of a lesson plan should look like when it is finished. Next, we will briefly look at some of the factors that influence lesson plan development. Finally, we will look at the impact of poor lesson planning. Now that you know what we will be covering, let's begin by taking a look at how a lesson plan should be structured.

SLIDE 6: Main Point One: Lesson Plan Structure. Every NTC lesson plan should contain directions as well as have an introduction, body and conclusion. You probably heard that old adage, "Tell them what you're going to talk about, talk about it, and then tell them what you told them." Well, that same adage applies to NTC lesson plans. The exception would be the directions component provides a quick overview of the lesson plan to the user (or instructor). The directions component answers immediate questions like "How long is the lesson?", "What handouts, supplies, or equipment are needed?", or "How is the classroom supposed to be arranged?" Next, every lesson plan should have an introduction; this is the part where you tell the students what you're going to train them to do and how you're going to do it. Next, we have the body; this is where you deliver the content. Finally, there is the last component, the conclusion; this is where you review key segments of the content and prepare the students for what comes next. Every NTC lesson plan should have these four major components. Now that you know what the major components are to a lesson plan let's take a closer look at the elements in each major component starting with the directions.

SLIDE 7: There are several elements in the directions component that every lesson plan should have. Those elements include: course name and number, lesson name and number (if it has one), outline, time increments, instructor preparation requirements (i.e., what to read or do before

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delivering the lesson), needed resources (i.e., handouts, equipment, etc.), room configuration (if applicable; more on this in the Maintaining a Positive Learning Environment Lesson), lesson objective(s), and references (i.e., books, website, magazines, laws, articles, etc.) used to develop the lesson plan. References are nice in that they provide credibility to the lesson and the instructor as well as the students with places to go to build their knowledge-base. Finally, some lessons include a strategy. The strategy is the “thought process” behind the content. It is written in a way that it sounds like the author of the lesson plan is talking to the would be instructor. It’s important to remember these elements in the directions component provide extremely valuable information for the primary instructor. This information allows the instructor to properly prepare for the presentation without having to guess or prepare from scratch! . Now that you know the elements of the directions component in a lesson plan, let’s take a look at the elements contained in the introduction. You will be required to deliver these elements each and every time you deliver an NTC lesson.

SLIDE 8: Elements in the introduction. The introduction has several very important elements; each is designed to help answer immediate questions that are on the mind of your adult audience. For example, who is the instructor and what makes him or her an expert? What will I be learning or doing during the lesson? What will be covered? Why do I need to listen or participate? The elements in the introduction will help to answer all of these questions. The elements are: attention step, instructor credibility, objectives, hook, route, and transition. Now that you know what the elements are in the introduction, let’s look at these elements a little bit more in depth.

SLIDE 9: The purpose of the attention step is to get your audience, well, thinking about your topic or, if you will, interested in your topic. You want to try and be creative here and do things that are intended to get your audience excited and interested in what you’re training them to do. There are a lot of different options available to you. For example, you could deliver a famous quote. You could start with some interesting facts. You could show a short movie clip if you wanted to and then maybe ask your participants or students, afterwards, some questions about

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that clip. You could do some role playing. You could even dress up and maybe do some acting. You could do some type of quick activity. Whatever the case, you're trying to simply get your audience enthused about your lesson. Now traditionally the attention step (sometime called the warm up) is intended to be very short because it's in the introduction. Usually, the entire introduction is only about five to ten minutes, so you want keep your attention step short. Remember, it's just intended to get them interested. All right, having said that, let's now take a look at the hook in the introduction; the purpose of the hook is pretty simple.

SLIDE 10: It is designed to focus your adult trainees on "what's in it for them". Why should they care about your lesson? Why is what you're going to train them to do important? So, if you can answer that question then you will have satisfied the hook element. If you want to change it up a little you could ask your students that question to see why they think the lesson would be important to them. So take this lesson for example, I could have asked you, "Why are lesson plans important? Why do instructors need lesson plans?" Remember, the hook is very powerful! The more you can convince your trainees they need the training, the more motivated they will be to participate and learn because there is value. After you hook them you definitely want to go over your objective(s).

SLIDE 11: Normally, you're going to have your lesson objectives provided to you by the design team in a design document. You should not modify them in any way, shape, or form unless you first talk to a training coordinator or instructional system specialist at the training center. Your responsibility with regard to designed objectives is two-fold. First, make sure you go over the objectives with the trainees so they know what they will be expected of them at the conclusion of your lesson. Second, make sure everything in the lesson plan is necessary to get the trainees to the intended lesson objectives. Remember, the objectives are the "heart and soul" of the lesson plan. Follow them to the letter! Now that we have talked about the objectives, let's take a look at the route.

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SLIDE 12: The route (sometimes called an *overview*) is a laundry list of the key things you're going to cover in the lesson in order to get your adult learners to the intended objectives. In other words, it's a road map of your lesson's main points. In this particular lesson you can go back and see there were four main points. If you remember, I stated we would review the structure of a lesson plan, the elements, the factors that influence lesson planning, and the impact of poor lesson planning. Those are the main points to this lesson. Always let your students know the route you're going to take to get them to the actual lesson objectives. The final two elements in your introduction should be your own credibility and a transition to the first main point listed in your route.

SLIDE 13: The purpose of credibility is to establish a connection with your adult learners that you know what you're talking about; in other words, you're an expert. However, keep it short. Basically, stick to things that you know, meaning, your experience. Where do you work? How long have you been doing that particular job? What is your title? Keep in mind when you establish credibility with your audience that you're in this instructor position for a reason...you've got a lot of experience! Now if you want to, you can share your formal education, but don't go over the top. Also, if you want to you can mention papers, books, or magazine articles that you've written or projects that you've worked on. However, just keep in mind to not be very long winded when it comes to your credibility or else you may "turn your audience off". Best thing to do, just keep it short and just tell them what your experience is and what your job is. This concludes all of the elements in the introduction; however, you can deliver these element in any order. They do not have to be delivered in a systematic fashion. Change it up based on the needs of the lesson and your own creativity!

SLIDE 14: There is one more thing you should always keep in mind, make sure you provide a transition for your trainees at the end of the introduction. In other words, you should transition from your introduction into the first main point of the body of your lesson. In fact, you should transition every time you switch topics or main points. Transitions review what was just covered

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and preview what is going to be covered next; they help your audience to stay with you during the lesson. For example, I'm going to now transition from the elements in the introduction to the elements in the body; here it is. **Now that you know what the elements are that should go into your introduction, let's go ahead and take a look at the elements that you should have in the body of your lesson plan.**

SLIDE 15: Elements in the body. The body of the lesson plan houses the content of the lesson. This is where the "meat and potatoes" of the lesson is kept. Content should be detailed enough that any other subject matter expert could deliver the lesson in the event the primary instructor cannot. PowerPoint alone will not be enough unless all of the required lesson plan information is in the notes section of the PowerPoint. All information to be shared with the participants should be written out in full detail. This is why really good lesson plans take time to develop, possibly weeks or even months. Good lesson plans have in the body detailed content, questions with responses, exercises and their associated instructions, instructor notes, and finally good transitions. Now that you know what goes into the body of a lesson plan, let's take a closer look at each of these elements.

SLIDE 16: The content of a lesson plan should follow the objectives and outline in the course design document (ask the course coordinator for this document). The content should also be extremely detailed; it should be written in a way (second person that is) that seems as if you, the instructor, are talking to the trainees. It's very nice to have it written this way because that's exactly how you're going to talk to the students when in the actual training environment. Again, if you are the one developing the lesson plan be very detailed so everything is covered; make sure you get those trainees to the intended objectives that you covered with them at the beginning of a lesson.

SLIDE 17: Not only should you have detailed content in the lesson plan but you should also have some questions that you are going to ask your adult learners. These questions are planned and

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will assist in getting some discussion generated (if that is your strategy). Also, each question should have anticipated responses, meaning, potential answers from the trainees. Anticipated responses are very nice in a sense that as instructors, you have something there to “jog” your memory. Keep in mind you’re not always going to get all the answers (or even the correct ones) from your students, nor are you going to remember all possible answers yourself. Therefore, what you have is kind of a memory jogger in case you don’t get the answers you want. As a facilitative instructor, you’re going to fill in those gaps when the students don’t give you all the answers that you want or need. I can personally tell you from experience, nothing in the lesson is more important than planned questions and their anticipated responses. These questions have really helped me learn how to ask good questions so that discussion can be generated and higher levels of learning achieved (more on this in the Asking Effective Questions lesson). Having said that, another key element in the body is instructor notes.

SLIDE 18: Instructor notes can be formal or informal; they can usually be found in the margins of the lesson plan. Formal instructor notes are those incorporated throughout the lesson plan by the author; they are very nice to have, especially when you’re the instructor responsible for delivering the lesson in the classroom. Formal instructor notes may tell the delivering instructor where something is located (e.g., hand-outs, equipment, etc.), how to facilitate an exercise (i.e., specific instructions), why a particular delivery strategy was selected, what the selected delivery strategy is intended to accomplish, or why a lesson topic is being delivered in a particular part of the lesson. Informal instructor notes are those that are personalized by the delivering instructor. You may want to remind yourself of something important like a story to tell, an example to cover, a fact to highlight, or additional questions to ask. These personal notes may be hand-written reminders in the margins so they stand out or even an insert page into the lesson itself. I cannot overstate the importance of these kind of notes. When I prepare to deliver a lesson, I look for opportunities to add my own life experiences into the lesson; this is what brings the lesson “to life”! Something else to keep in mind when it comes to instructor notes...they will be there the next time you deliver the lesson. They are great reminders or memory joggers. Now that we

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have covered instructor notes, let's take a look at another critical element in the body, the exercises (sometimes referred to as assessments).

Slide 19: Exercises contained in the lesson should be clearly explained. The delivering instructor should never have to guess when or how an exercise is supposed to be accomplished. Furthermore, an instructor should know exactly what is needed (i.e., resources) to successfully facilitate the exercise. Additionally, a delivering instructor should know the purpose for the exercise and what objective(s) the exercise is linked to in the design. If an exercise is not well-planned or linked to an objective, chances are you're going to hear about it on end-of course feedback evaluations from the trainees. To prevent this from happening, be sure to ask yourself this very important question when developing the lesson plan, "Would another instructor tasked to deliver this lesson be able to successfully facilitate this exercise without contacting me?" If the answer is yes, your lesson plan should be good-to-go. Now that we have covered all of the elements in the body of the lesson, let's take a look at the elements in the last major component, the conclusion.

SLIDE 20: Elements in the conclusion. Based on my experience, the conclusion is often the most neglected piece of the training presentation. However, it is a critical piece to the training process. Its key elements serve to reinforce important material covered during the lesson, determine if objectives were achieved, explain how the newly acquired skill can be used on-the-job (this is called *Transfer*), and finally, describe what comes next. Success in the conclusion is determined by allowing the participants to see the lesson objectives again and to demonstrate they've internalized the content by answering in-depth review questions (kind of like a quiz, if time allows). The summary itself is a debrief of the main points; however, only key points need to be reviewed. The summary is a way for the instructor to assess and reinforce critical information, but keep in mind the summary is short. In fact, the whole conclusion should only be approximately five to ten minutes in total length. After you have summarized the content of the lesson and reviewed the lesson objective(s), be sure to explain how the newly acquired skill can

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be used on-the-job. The *transfer statement* is kind of like the hook in the introduction; it serves to energize the participants. Don't skip this element! This is the last chance you have to really "drive home" the importance of using the information or skill you trained them to perform. The last thing that you want to do is have some kind of closing statement that basically lets the student know that the lesson is over. Many times I have seen instructors ask, "Are there any more questions?" I would recommend staying away from this approach because you may get too many questions and not have enough time to answer them all. Besides, if students have questions they will approach you on break. Instead of asking that question, put some thought into the conclusion and end the lesson with a "bang!" Meaning, give them some type of really good wrap up that ties back into your attention step in the introduction.

For example, maybe you asked the following rhetorical question in the attention step, "Are you a leader?" Then, in the conclusion, you end by saying, "You have learned a lot today about what it takes to be a leader. Therefore, the next time someone asks you, 'Are you a leader?' You might take a little more time in formulating your answer because now you know what it really takes. I have enjoyed my time with you today, thank you for your time!"

Now that you know what it takes to deliver an effective conclusion, let's go ahead and proceed to our next main point, Factors Impacting Lesson Plan development.

SLIDE 21: There are several factors that can impact lesson plan development. One of the biggest factors is your primary job. For many NTC instructors, developing a lesson plan can take a backseat when so many other priorities exist in the work place. With that said, many supervisors may not be able provide you the time needed to properly develop the lesson plan. Another factor that can impact lesson planning is resources. The availability of time, money,

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materials, facilities, and equipment can impact lesson plan development. For example, your lesson plan might call for a field exercise or a specific type of equipment to facilitate an exercise that is linked to one of the lesson's objectives. However, the equipment may not be available in quantity or quality to successfully carry out the exercise, or the field location may not be available due to access or weather. It is important to carefully consider all the resources needed to successfully deliver the lesson way in advance of the date of delivery so that adjustments can be made. In the event your job, supervisor, or needed resources impact your lesson planning, please be sure to contact your coordinator as soon as possible so that alternative solutions can be developed and implemented far enough in advance of the actual delivery date. Finally, your lesson plan may be impacted by NTC coordinators and instructional systems specialist (ISS) as well as your own peer group. Coordinators and ISSs will be reviewing your lesson plan for technical accuracy and coverage of lesson objectives not to mention they will determine if your lesson plan follows the format discussed in this lesson. Additionally, your peers will be reviewing your lesson for technical accuracy. Once these reviews have been completed you will be provided with the feedback to make the necessary edits/changes to your lesson plan. Now that you are aware of some factors that can influence lesson plan development, let's look at the impact of poor lesson planning.

SLIDE 22: When it comes to developing a lesson plan, the author plays a huge role in how successful that lesson will be when delivered in the classroom. If developed poorly (or not developed at all), the lesson will have an immediate effect on the instructor! For example, maybe there is no lesson plan at all; maybe the only thing available is a PowerPoint presentation. Unfortunately, PowerPoint slides don't tell the whole story and when used as a lesson plan the entire lesson might be presented as a lecture and contain no exercises. This can have a negative impact on the instructor whereby students think the lesson was boring and/or not useful because it was not linked to needed job skills (or designed objectives). Furthermore, a non-existent or poorly developed lesson plan may cause the delivering instructor to miss important content altogether. When this happens the spotlight is brightest on the delivering instructor to

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the extent some embarrassment may be experienced. Of course, participants may also be impacted. Adult learners come to training courses for a specific reason...they want to learn how to do the skills associated with their jobs! If the lesson plan is poorly developed and/or does not focus on the targeted objectives, participants may leave the classroom untrained or poorly trained. When this happens, the Bureau has employees returning to the work place unable to perform their day-to-day job tasks. Also consider the fact that poorly developed lesson plans may reflect negatively on the course as well as other instructors. Meaning, all course content is linked together like a chain; when one link in the chain is broken or non-existent, the whole chain is much weaker. There may be times when other instructors rely on other course lessons to be delivered in accordance with the design; when they are not it may impact the effectiveness of their lesson and the entire course. Now that you know what impact a poor lesson plan can have on others, let's wrap this lesson up.

SLIDE 23: In conclusion, the objective of this lesson was for you to be able to...

SLIDE 24: Given a sample lesson plan, determine if it has all the required components based on the minimum criteria specified in the NTC Lesson Plan Evaluation Checklist & Guidelines. You will achieve this objective once you attend the live webinars whereby you will complete a group exercise aimed at reviewing a sample lesson plan to see if it has everything it is supposed to have.

SLIDE 25: In order to get you to that objective we covered quite a bit of information in this video lesson. First, we covered the major components of a lesson plan. Remember, a good lesson plan has four major components that provide a structure or framework for delivering a lesson presentation: the directions, an introduction, the body, and the conclusion. A good introduction has the several very important elements. First, there's credibility. Be sure to establish your credibility by telling the audience who you are and what experience you have with the topic. Next, provide an attention step to get your audience interested in your lesson topic. Also, review lesson

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objectives with your students. You want to make sure they understand what success looks like once they've completed the lesson. It should be very clear what they should be able to do at the conclusion of your lesson. Also, make sure you hook the audience by telling them why the lesson is important; there should be numerous reasons why the lesson is important. Next, make sure you establish the route, meaning, tell your participants what the main ideas or topics will be covered in order to get them to the intended lesson objectives. Oh, and don't forget to transition into the body of your lesson. The body of your presentation has detailed content in it. Be sure to put in your lesson plan everything that you're going to say to the students in the classroom; that way, nothing is missed. However, make sure the content links directly to the intended objectives. Also, make sure you write in a way that makes it personal, meaning, write in second person. Talk to the students in your lesson plan. Next, include specific instructions for the exercises and also provide questions and anticipated responses to generate discussion and to assess if your participants are on track. Finally, make sure you add formal instructor notes to the lesson plan to make sure the delivering instructor has pertinent information with regards to how the lesson is to be delivered. After you have developed the body of the lesson don't forget to include a great conclusion. The conclusion should review the objective(s), summarize the content, and describe how the newly acquired skill or knowledge can be utilized. Remember, a good summary reviews each of the main points and involves the participants by allowing them to demonstrate content mastery. Be sure to ask your students a lot of good questions for each main topic to find out if they reached intended lesson objectives. In addition to learning what goes into the structure of a lesson plan, you learned that there are things that can influence lesson plan development. Your job as well as needed resources can impact lesson plan development; therefore, be sure to contact your program coordinator should anything get in the way of development. Finally, you learned that poorly developed lesson plans can have a huge impact on others, including you! However, when you develop a good lesson plan it will always be there for you and others delivering the lesson.

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SLIDE 26: Remember, lesson plans are the backbone of standardized training. Instructors need well-developed lesson plans to deliver training presentations that are organized and make sense to the participants. For me, an instructor with over 10,000 hours of classroom experience, I would never instruct without one. It's my roadmap to a successful training presentation. Now that you know what goes into a well-developed lesson plan, you can start developing your own so you can deliver that award-winning lesson presentation! **As a reminder, please print out the Lesson Plan (Exercise) hand-out in the Instruction Seminar Course Materials on the Knowledge Resource Center (KRC) and bring it with you to the live webinar (see the course syllabus). We will use it for an exercise; you may review the lesson plan hand-out ahead of time if you like for deficiencies.**