



Writing an Interpretive Lesson Plan

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It is important for trainers to model what they teach. This is effective for teaching any of the communication arts. Therefore, it makes sense that the training session itself demonstrate or highlight facets of the subject matter being taught. This may also be said of the planning stages of any lesson. If we demonstrate good interpretive organizational skills in our planning it should be reflected with good interpretive technique flowing throughout each stage of our presented modules. **Good lesson plans lead to great lessons!**

There are many forms of lesson plans that can be effectively used. They are offered in numerous education and trainer's guides. Each one can be adapted to individual styles and needs. However, as Interpretive Trainers, we need to adapt a plan of sorts that incorporates the best elements of an educational lesson plan and the interpretive outline.

We should probably start by stating what a lesson plan is not.

A lesson plan is not:

- A class syllabus or overview.
- A simple schedule for trainer/student reference.
- A class flyer

Several texts offer combinations of the following as to what a lesson plan should include:

- Title
- Session objectives
- Target audience (often overlooked if teaching the same subject matter numerous times.)
- Prerequisites
- Teaching principles
- Content of lesson
- Explanation of activities and desired results
- Methodology
- Delivery times
- Materials required and resources
- Links to previous material and future subjects

A good lesson plan assists the trainer by:

- Ensuring objectives are defined and lesson is heading in the right direction.
- Allowing the trainer to check proper sequencing of lesson segments for most effective learning.
- Allowing the trainer to adjust material prior to the lesson without spending time researching the subject matter again.
- Offers a checklist for required materials and resources.

- Gives the trainer a guide for delivery times; the ability to adjust the lesson to remain within the session time frame and adequately cover the material in an orderly fashion.

Gabler and Schroeder in their text, *Constructivist Methods for the Secondary Classroom*, offer a two segment method for planning a lesson; the Prelude and the Enactment. The Prelude provides the foundation of the lesson, the information the trainer needs for reference. The Enactment explains the development of engaging the participant in the process. They feel each segment should be outlined as a part of the planning process. They offer seven Core Components as a template for professional lesson planning. Rationale, Performance Objectives and Materials are part of the Prelude process and Hook, Aim, Development and Culmination are included under the Enactment segment.

OK! This may be more information than you wanted or feel you need. However, the important factor is to realize as you spend time planning and organizing your training sessions there are a wealth of resources out there in the area of lesson planning and its relationship to the learning process. We only need to take advantage of the knowledge gained from years of research and theory testing.

By now, you are probably aware that lesson planning may be quite involved or it can be relatively simple. To better suit your personal and organizational needs you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Who will be using your lesson plan? Is it strictly for your personal use or will you be sharing it with other trainers?
- Will it be reviewed by supervisors?
- Must it be presented for approval prior to training?
- Is it possible that others will need to fill in for you or teach in your place? Could they follow your lesson plan?
- How you will evaluate your success?
- Is the lesson something you will be using frequently or infrequently?

All of the above questions can help you determine just how extensive you may want your written plan. If you lesson plan solely for your personal use you have a great deal of flexibility. Personal notes, reminders, your own short hand, etc. are fine if you are comfortable with your plan. However, it is quite probable that your work place, organization or contracting partner may require you submit something of greater depth and detail.

Another thing you might have noticed about the list of suggested lesson planning items are similarities to the objects contained within the NAI Interpretive Presentation Outline produced by Jay Miller and Kelly Farrell:

- Title
- Theme
- Targeted Audience
- Goals
- Objectives

- Resources/materials
- Program outline
 - Introduction
 - Body
 - Conclusion

I am offering a suggested interpretive trainer's lesson planning template. I believe it combines the best features of the lesson planning process and the interpretive presentation outline. I also feel that it begins the modeling process with good interpretive organizational technique. This is something you may adjust and alter for your personal use. It is only a guide.

The Interpretive Lesson Plan

Title: It does not have to be catchy or have a hook unless you are trying to entice people to attend your session. It can simply be the subject of your lesson; themes, delivery, objectives, etc.

Theme: A theme may not always be applicable to your lesson. However, try including one that best expresses the essence of your lesson. Or to paraphrase Bill Lewis, "Sum up your lesson in a single sentence."

Examples: A Theme creates the thread that stitches your presentation together.
Using the senses enhances your ability to forge deep personal connections for your audience.

Targeted Audience: Always name primary audience when writing a plan. It will serve as a reminder when reusing the lesson plan to insure suitability for a new audience.

Lesson Goals: State what you are attempting to teach; be sure to include subject understanding, awareness and relationships to other aspects of interpretation.

Lesson Objectives: As in an interpretive presentation, how will you measure or evaluate your effectiveness? State how you will measure goal accomplishment.

Resources/Materials: What materials will you need to deliver this lesson; handouts, props, equipment, etc.? What resources did you use in your research for the lesson? What resources would you recommend for further study?

Lesson Time: Total time to accomplish lesson; one hour, 2 hours, etc.

Lesson Content: Should contain:

- A time line containing delivery time, order of each segment and the progression of the learning process.
- Time line is probably best written as time of day, not elapsed time. This will work better for adhering to your schedule on the fly.

Example: 2:00 PM Introductions
 2:10 Icebreaker “Rope Map”
 2:30 Introduction to theme writing, etc.

- An introduction of what is going to be covered, how long it will take and what will be expected of each participant.
- An icebreaker, if needed. You may not want one if the lesson is part of a bigger class or workshop and you and the participants are well acquainted. However, if one is used try to make it relevant to the lesson topic.
- Stipulate the type and content of each segment: lecture, discussion, question and answer, demonstration, group activity, individual work period, role playing, etc.
- Explain each segment; how to accomplish it, important points, what will be accomplished and segment’s meaning and relationship to the learning process at hand.
- Allow time at end of lesson for questions and review. Be sure to review covered material such as key words, definitions, concepts, principles, tools and skills.
- As with any good interpretive presentation, try to include something that addresses each learning style, involves the senses, is interactive, relative to your students, and welcomes meaningful learning and engagement by employing a good questioning strategy.
- If your lesson contains all of the above you will find you have planned a successful training session!

Good lesson plans provide the foundation for creating a stimulating and enjoyable learning experience. Have some fun with this!

Sources:

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