

# Lesson Planning 101

Co-Creating Something you can *actually* Use!

**First of all...**

- Big thanks for reaching out to us and inviting us to talk !
- Big thanks for what you do!
- Big thanks to organizers.
- Many great things already happening with educational materials/lesson plans available: how is this applied? What is the latest?
- Practical tools and creating something that matters for people who work in a variety of settings – take the jargon out of it, and get to something we can actually use.
- Structure/practical tips for good lesson planning
- Making things easy/accessible for the people you're working with.

# Part 1: Language and learning

Why does language play a key role in lesson  
planning?

Let's talk about why it matters.

In a fire and life safety context.



Are we surprised?

Actual reactions from adult friends/colleagues when I agreed to do the presentation:

- 1) If I was going to get to slide down the pole?
- 2) The gasoline fight/fire in the movie Zoolander.
- 3) Various calendar jokes.
- 4) Oh wow, that's great that they are doing that!
- 5) I've been hoping to make some partnerships with the fire/life safety folks too.

# My own associations/ bias

Memories of my dad changing my smoke detectors.

Leaving a hair straightener under my bed for a month, plugged in without realizing.

Stories in the news – forest fires, apartment building fires, etc.

A fake fireplace video we watch at Christmas, campfires, etc.

My dad always saying: “Blow out your candles” – the times I forgot and left the house.

A teenage friend’s house burning down

Images of fire in myth, arts & culture, etc.

An ex-partner’s sister with MS passed away in a house fire

**Our beliefs and  
prior learning  
matter.**

## **KIDS**

- **Where do you think kids get most of their impressions about fire & life safety?**

## **ADULTS**

- **Where do you think adults get most of their impressions about fire & life safety?**

Let's talk about  
fire.

# How do you feel about fire?

(Please take a moment to jot down any words/images/ideas/associations come to mind. Try to go with the 'hot' thoughts – the ones that give you the biggest reaction or feeling).



## Questions to consider.

- 1) How/why did you *personally* come have a career in fire and life safety?
- 2) What has kept you in it/motivated?
- 3) What is the biggest misconception or misunderstanding you feel people have about fire, safety and/or this industry?

If you had to summarize why this type of work matters to you and what you are trying to achieve in one or two sentences?

Intrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation

# “Lingo”

- Every industry (Education and Fire & Life Safety included!) has its own language/terminology that can be confusing for ‘outsiders’, new colleagues or the general public.
- While it can sometimes be helpful to use a shorthand or acronym (or occasionally even necessary to use industry-specific language), we should always consider the impact on our audience.

**Can you think of some acronyms or terminology that I (or someone from the general public) might not understand in your industry?**

- Teachers traditionally love lingo, but sometimes it can unintentionally **exclude** students/parents, or the very members of the community we are trying to work with or serve.

# Language in *Teaching & Learning*

## **Language matters in teaching & learning because:**

- It conveys energy, enthusiasm, information, meaning
- Information can be of life or death importance
- Different languages of our audience (ESL, ASL, etc.)
- Different communication styles and literacy skills of facilitators, teachers and participants
- We tend to be a very verbal focused society, but there are many other learning styles and 'languages'
- Lesson Plans are still traditionally 'written'. And who is writing them?
- Materials you are using– are they accessible? (e.g. subtitles on videos, handouts in multiple formats?)

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# Part 2: Lesson Plan Basics

Design, Structure & Content

## The Good News!

- 1) There is a natural awe, wonder and fascination with fire (even a possible 'negative' interest could turn into a positive one in a teachable moment).
- 2) There are many fantastic, good quality tools and lesson plans out there to assist your work already!
- 3) There is a large degree of respect in our society for people who work in these industries. Typically you will be presenting to a supportive and interested audience.

It's about a  
feeling.

- If you are not genuinely 'moved', invested, curious, excited by what you are delivering – if it doesn't give you goosebumps, make you excited, make you feel something, if you don't understand it or engage with it, etc. your audience will very likely not be interested either.
- The topics you are dealing with can also be sensitive; you really have to be aware of the potential impact of your content and method of delivery -and feelings of your target audience to put appropriate strategies, warnings, and support in place. This could be due to a 'trigger', past experience, or even an emotional day. "Leave your problems at the door" is a myth.

## What is a lesson plan?

A lesson plan is an outline of what you intend to achieve during an educational/outreach experience. It provides an overview of the information, resources and activities needed to organize an effective presentation or visit.

## Basic Ingredients

There are so many templates available. What do most lesson plans have in common?

Basic Info (date, facilitator, location, # of participants)

Topic/ Learning Objectives/Focus Questions

Materials/Tools

Special Instructions (accommodations for learning, support staff, etc.)

Plans for beginning, middle and end with timing

Assessment/Success Criteria?  
(Did they 'get' it?)

Resources/Next Steps



## Who/what is it for?

- It is *for* **instructors/facilitators** to help them deliver with more comfort and ease.
- It is for **accountability** and **communication**.
- It designed to help **maximize student learning**.
- It is to help **focus** content and delivery.

You can think of it as a recipe, but there is some room to experiment and add 'spice'. A lesson plan should be a working document. Something that is evolving and flexible and adaptable to different groups, contexts, facilitators, locations (e.g. one size does not fit all).

## Why bother?

- A set of guidelines to help you feel prepared/deliver a quality and **inclusive experience** for all (having a plan *really* helps!).
- ‘Walk your talk’ – e.g. if you’re encouraging others to be prepared, this is demonstrated in your approach and style through modelling. It allows your audience to take you seriously.
- Short time to make an impression and fit in a great deal of content. It helps with time management, especially during fast paced lessons/visits.
- You are delivering very important information: potentially life or death.
- When you have all the ‘details’ sorted, it leaves more room for fun!
- Public safety/education/awareness
- Resources – opportunities for partnerships, grants/funding
- Remember your own reasons and motivations for doing this work

## What ingredients are essential for success?

- **Professionalism.** The information you present has to be **accurate**. *If you make a mistake, you will take responsibility for it. Follow up with the necessary steps.*
- It has to include **multiple methods** of instruction and engage all learners. It has to be inclusive in design, varied activity and use accessible language, e.g. everyone is involved and can learn.
- It has to be something **you feel OK** doing. If not take responsibility and speak to a supervisor.
- **Good pacing** – read your audience, and understand attention span/context. A strong beginning and end.
- Material has to be **appropriate level** for audience
- **Safety.** It has to be considerate/compassionate and sensitive. Participants and staff need to feel ‘safe’.

# Where is the spice/creativity?

- Engagement is key. Try to set the scene before hand.
- Props/tools/equipment/artifacts/photos
- Games, e.g. crime scene mystery, physicality, role play, obstacles
- Competition
- Stories: personal, historical or about people the audience can relate to (their own age, celebrities)
- Humour (film, cartoon/comic, etc.)
- Different dynamics: groups, individual, pair work
- Choices when appropriate
- Incorporating technology/apps
- Element of surprise (but be aware!), using the senses, etc.
- Community/cross-curricular partnerships
- Innovative locations/room set up
- Extension activities and future challenges (even great questions!)
- Prizes/giveaways
- Food! (when allowed)

**In summary...**

## **WHAT HAS TO BE THERE?**

- Accuracy and organization of information
- A learning goal/outcome
- Inclusive and accessible
- Appropriateness of activity and timing
- Compassion and respect of boundaries
- An opening 'hook'/closing
- Opportunities for 'check-ins'/assessment

## **WHAT MAKES IT EVEN BETTER?**

## A collaborative approach

### THE CREATOR/WRITER OF LESSON PLAN

- Brings a wide range of tools/ideas/previous experience/philosophy/education and teaching experience
- Must consider the unique nature of each context
- Can assist with research and liaise with venue
- Imbed choice and variety into plans, assist with accommodations
- Must work alongside (consider needs of) teachers and learners

### THE FACILITATOR(S)

- Must contribute when possible – consistent feedback – how did this work?
- Personalize when possible to help with comfort/motivation
- If team-teaching, having clear roles and clearly communicating with partner – work to your strengths in lesson plan. Use it. Adapt as necessary.
- Advocate for your ideas. Be willing to be flexible.

Collaboration  
continued...

## THE TEACHER/VENUE/HOSTS

- Find out as much as you can beforehand. Be aware of instructions, prior knowledge, curriculum/learning expectations, their needs. Is this the 'regular' teacher?
- Make use of teacher and support staff with clear plans for how you intend to include them embedded into the plan (but please discuss it with them!).
- Risk assessment attached to plan (if required)
- Ask for what you need! Room set up/ location/tech/supplies/curriculum

## THE STUDENTS/PARTICIPANTS

- Finding ways to develop some success criteria together.
- Volunteers/participation
- Being sensitive to their individual needs (not everyone wants to get up and participate!). Consider this in your planning.
- Allow room for choice, flexibility to linger on their interests, questions, natural curiosity
- Student feedback or being involved in the design process?

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## Part 3: Creating a Lesson Plan



# Task: Lesson Plan Activity A

Imagine you have been asked to give a 30-45 minute presentation. After reviewing the request on the index card, what further information would you need to plan a great session? Create an appropriate lesson objective/goal.

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# Part 4: Trends in Teaching & Learning

# Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- Borrowed from the world of architecture and design this concept is based on the idea that when we make accommodations for certain kinds of learning needs and disabilities, these often end up improving the overall quality and experience for everyone.
- Inclusivity
- What is the difference between UDL and “differentiation”?
- AODA Training

## Lived experience/Prior Knowledge

- Adult educators are guided to build upon and acknowledge learners' previous life experience, skills, talents, and use those as a foundation for the lesson.
- Keep in mind with children or adolescents too. When possible, get a sense of what previous experience they've had with a topic.

You might try:

A pre-visit questionnaire

A check in when you arrive (e.g. a game, hands up/hands down activity, quiz, etc.)

Also, "who is at the table?" at planning stages now a big consideration.

# Cross- Curricular/ Interdisciplinary

- Combining two or more subjects
- Using the arts to as an approach to learning
- Experiential education
- Outdoor education
- Indigenous education/acknowledgement of land

# Community Partnerships

- **Communication**
- **Funding (grant opportunities, e.g. artists to collaborate with community organizations).**
- **Shared responsibilities?**
- **Do what you do best! Expertise.**
- **Helps people understand the connections**
- **A sense of community**
- **Peace/conflict resolution**
- **Anti-bullying initiatives**
- **Libraries**
- **City of Kingston artist roster**



# Mental Health & Wellness

“Growth mindset”

Well being/happiness

Environmental wellness – organic living, awareness of climate change, nature

Inter-generational

Mixed ability

Meditation/yoga

Respect for faiths

Giving ‘back’ in the community/gratitude

Creating caring classrooms

# Technology & Social Media

- Working with these tools to enhance learning and improve engagement, accessibility, communication, global opportunities. Games/apps, discussion boards, assistive technology, etc.
- New 'safety' implications.



# Inclusive language

- Gender
- Using “friends” in classrooms rather than *boys* and *girls*
- Sensitivities to “moms” and “dads”, cultural celebrations, what is a ‘family’, etc.
- Respectful terminology

# Assessment

Image taken from UNESCO's  
International Institute for  
Educational Planning portal

## Assessment for Learning

- enables teachers to use information about students' knowledge, understanding and skills to inform their teaching
- teachers provide feedback to students about their learning and how to improve

## Assessment as Learning

- involves students in the learning process where they monitor their own progress, ask questions and practise skills
- students use self-assessment and teacher feedback to reflect on their learning, consolidate their understanding and work towards learning goals

## Assessment of Learning

- assists teachers to use evidence of student learning to assess student achievement against learning goals and standards

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# Task: Lesson Plan Activity B

Rough Draft Lesson Plan

## What to do if things don't go according to plan?

- My equipment doesn't show up or work.
- Something is inaccurate in the plan/my delivery?
- The location changes and impacts my plan.
- There is a kid who just won't stop talking!
- The teacher leaves me alone in the classroom without any staff support and students are challenging me.
- I forget the lesson plan.
- I got the wrong lesson plan.
- I'm embarrassed by the tasks in the lesson plan.
- I didn't have time to prepare a lesson plan.
- The video won't play.
- The audience is laughing in places I didn't want them to and isn't taking me/this seriously.

A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text 'Please remember...'. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

Please  
remember...

- Lesson plans are not 'fixed documents' – while it's great to keep drafts, remember this is an evolving practice. We are always learning too.



Ticket out of 'class'.