

Why Use a Training Session Plan?

It takes time to plan a good training session. However, you and your trainees will benefit from this preparation.

As you plan, you visualize each step of the class. This helps you ensure that you've thought about everything that you need to say, and that you present information in a logical order. You'll also be able to prepare for points that people might find difficult to understand.

After your session, you can use your plan to work out what went well – and what didn't – so that you can adapt it for future lessons.

Last, a training session plan will be invaluable for a substitute instructor, if you can't make it to class.

How to Develop a Session Plan

To develop a session plan, it's useful to use a standard training plan template. This helps you organize material consistently over sessions, and avoid duplicating topics.

You can download a lesson plan template [here](#). Then, to plan your session, follow the steps below.

Step 1: Define Learning Objectives

Your first step is to specify what you want your trainees to learn, and determine how you will measure this.

Think about these questions:

- What are the most important concepts or skills that trainees need to understand by the end of the class?
- Why are these concepts and skills important?

- How will you know that they have understood these correctly?

Tip 1:

You can use the **ABCD Learning Objectives Model** to set a training objective that comprehensively addresses your learners' needs.

This helps you understand your **A**udience, define the **B**ehavior needed at the end of the session, specify the **C**onditions under which knowledge will be used, and determine the **D**egree of knowledge needed.

Tip 2:

You should only have one or two learning objectives for each class. If you have more, you are likely to have too much information to cover, and trainees may feel overwhelmed with information.

Step 2: Clarify Key Topics and Related Concepts

Your class will focus on a few central ideas or skills, but you'll need to explain related concepts to reach your learning objectives.

List your key topics and their related concepts, and then group them together – for example, using an **Affinity Diagram** – to show how they're connected.

Step 3: Organize Material

Once you have a general idea of what you need to cover, draft a lesson outline. List all of the points that you need to cover, in the order in which you'll cover them.

Use the **5 E Learning Cycle** to link information to trainees' existing skills and knowledge. This will help them put it into a personal context, which, in turn, will help them retain it better.

Now, insert the information from your outline into your training plan template. Check back against your initial brainstorming document to make sure that you've covered everything that you need to say. Also, compare your template with your objectives for the session, to make sure that you'll achieve them.

Step 4: Plan Presentation Techniques

Now think about how you will teach this material to your students. It's best to use several different presentation approaches to keep students engaged, and to appeal to people with different **learning styles** . (This is very important, because learning styles vary widely.)

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Consider using these activities in your training session:

- **Lectures** are ideal for introducing a topic. Keep lectures to 30 minutes or less, and summarize the important points at the beginning and end. You may want to use a guest speaker if the topic is highly specialized.
- **Demonstrations** work best when you need to show the steps in a process or task. Learners can try the task out for themselves, or you can demonstrate it in front of the group.
- **Discussions** and debates are useful after a lecture, because they allow trainees to ask questions about the concepts that they have just learned. Consider handing out a list of questions or topics to prompt a discussion.
- **Online learning** is helpful when trainees need to gain practical experience of IT skills, if they need to access video or audio material, or if quizzes and self-test activities will be useful.
- **Role play** involves trainees acting out a new skill in a simulated environment, and learning from feedback from other participants.
- **Small group teaching** helps learners clarify their understanding of the new

information. They can explain it to one another in their own words, and answer questions.

- **Case studies** can help learners put new information into context. As they process the information and relate it to a situation that's relevant to them, they create mental connections that will help them recall the information later.

Once you've decided which training methods to use, note them in your template.

Step 5: Include Evaluation

Now, think about when you'll check that students have understood key points. Build in learning checks and question-and-answer sessions, and include these in your template.

Also, consider how you will evaluate the session. You may want to use a formal measurement approach aligned with **Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model**, or you may want to create a simple on- or off-line questionnaire that will help you tell if the session has been successful.

Step 6: Focus on Timing

Finally, think about the timing of your session. Some concepts or skills will take more time to master than others, so identify these up front, and allow students extra time to absorb or practice the material.

Record the time that you will allocate for each concept or section on your training plan, and make sure that you've allowed plenty of time to focus on the core concepts – if you don't have enough time, you'll need to run additional sessions, or narrow your learning objectives and reduce the number of topics that you plan to cover.

Note:

You can use the same steps to create a plan for an online training session.

However, you'll want to allow extra time for learners to log in to the training

platform, ask questions about it, and resolve any technical problems.

You'll also need to include extra opportunities to check for comprehension, because it can be harder to see if students have fully understood the lesson when you're not in the same room as them. Ask frequent open-ended questions to confirm understanding.

Example Training Session Plan

The example below shows a completed training session plan.

Learning Objective: To teach new team members in a call center how to handle challenging customer calls more effectively.

Key Points	Training Aids/Tools	Time
Introduction		
Open session: introduce tutor, outline structure, explain "housekeeping."	Handouts showing session structure	10 mins.
Employees need to be able to handle difficult customers confidently.	Recordings of positive and negative customer calls.	30 mins.
When customers feel that they haven't had a positive interaction, they are more likely to switch suppliers.	Circle activity: ask each trainee for a comment on the recordings. What words come to mind? How well are the recorded agents handling their calls? Circle activity: ask each trainee to share a negative call that they've experienced as a customer, and to explain how they felt about it.	
Main Session		
Run through the full call process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer call and determine customer needs.• Gather customer information.• Analyze customer's emotion.• Present solutions based on	Group activity: trainees discuss how to assess needs and information during the call. Pair activity: use role play to practice difficult calls.	60 mins.

customer's needs.

Conclusion

Summarize practical methods of handling difficult callers	Group summary activity: students list the solutions that they found most effective, and why, on a flip chart.	30 mins.
Wrap-up questions	Open question session	10 mins.
Evaluation	Pass out questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of the session.	10 mins.

Key Points

A training session plan provides a useful format for thinking about the activities and resources you'll use to guide a group toward a learning objective.

To create an effective training session plan, take the following steps:

Step 1: Define your objectives. Step 2: Clarify key topics and related concepts. Step 3: Organize material. Step 4: Plan presentation techniques. Step 5: Include evaluation. Step 6: Focus on timing.

Training session plans take time to create, but they ensure that the information you need to teach follows a logical sequence. This will help your students engage with it, and, ultimately, understand and retain it.

You can also use training session plans for online training sessions, although you'll need to allow extra time, and include extra learning checks, as it may be harder to gauge whether students have understood all of your points.