

## Lesson 2

# Using and Developing Lesson Plans



### Key Words

facilitator  
focus  
energizer  
inquire  
gather  
process  
reflection

### What You Will Learn to Do

- Develop a lesson plan

### Linked Core Abilities

- Build your capacity for lifelong learning
- Communicate using verbal, nonverbal, visual, and written technique

### Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Explain the purpose of a lesson plan
- Describe the four-phases of a lesson plan
- Relate teaching and learning to the four phase lesson plan model
- Relate learning activities to learning objectives
- Associate active learning principles to effective lesson plan development
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

## Introduction

During your life, both in school and out, you may be called on to instruct others about something on which you are an expert. It is important to know how to plan and execute a lesson.

Lesson plans are essential tools used for teaching. Instructors use a lesson plan to organize their thoughts and the information they plan to present to a class. This organization helps to create a degree of standardization in the presentation of learning objectives by instructors around the world. Consequently, a standardized lesson plan would show these teachers:

- **What material they should teach**
- **To what extent they should teach the material**
- **In what sequence they should teach the material**

As a result, different instructors using the same lesson plan teach the same learning objectives and conduct the class in similar ways.

JROTC lesson plans identify the target competency, linked core abilities, and learning objectives. They go on to provide detailed guidelines for facilitating the cadet learning activities. You should use the lesson plans in conjunction with the learning plans as tools for planning, guiding, and assessing learning. The lessons incorporate sound learning principles (such as multiple intelligences, thinking processes, reflection, Bloom's taxonomy, and authentic assessment) and address the McREL Standards, JROTC program outcomes, and JROTC core abilities. Program outcomes describe what cadets will know and be able to do upon successful completion of the JROTC program. They serve as a tool for summarizing and communicating the intended results of the JROTC program. The program outcomes provide the foundation for mastery of the "big picture" proficiencies and help instructors and cadets begin and progress "with the end in mind."

## Competencies

Each JROTC lesson addresses a competency as the intended learning result. Competencies describe discipline-specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are measurable and observable. Performance standards (criteria and conditions) provide the specifications for assessing mastery of a competency. Cadets show they have learned competencies by applying them in the completion of assessment tasks that require them to do one or more of the following:

- **Make a decision.**
- **Perform a skill.**
- **Perform a service.**
- **Solve a problem.**
- **Create a product.**

## Core Abilities

The JROTC Core abilities describe the broad, life-long skills that every cadet needs for success in all career and life roles. They are drawn from the overall goals and values that drive the JROTC program. Core abilities are not learned in one lesson or LET; they are linked to lesson competencies to integrate or thread them throughout the JROTC curriculum. Core abilities include one or more of the following:

- **Build your capacity for lifelong learning.**
- **Communicate using verbal, nonverbal, visual, and written techniques.**
- **Take responsibility for your actions and choices.**
- **Do your share as a good citizen in your school, community, country, and the world.**
- **Treat self and others with respect.**
- **Apply critical thinking techniques.**

## Learning Plans

JROTC learning plans are designed to support cadet learning. Learning plans answer the questions cadets need to know about what they will learn, guide cadets through the four-phase lesson, help cadets take responsibility for their own learning, and support cadets' ability to manage and adjust their own thinking and learning processes (metacognition).

Instructors should ensure that cadets have the learning plan for each lesson at the beginning of the lesson. Engaging cadets in a review of the learning plan at the start of each lesson, instructors or cadet leaders should

- **Highlight the target competency and other information provided.**
- **Explain why that information is important; for example, criteria/conditions tell them how they will be evaluated on their performance.**
- **Show cadets how learning plans can help them.**
- **Guide cadets to refer to and use the learning plan throughout the learning process.**

## The Four-Phase Lesson Plan

Lesson plans consist of four phases: inquire, gather, process, and apply. The following sections examine these phases in more detail.

### Inquire Phase

The purpose of the **inquire** phase is to determine the lesson's starting point. As a teacher, you need to determine what students already know or don't know about the lesson content. Knowing the answers to the following questions will help both you and your students understand their current level of knowledge.

#### Key Note Term

**inquire** – to ask about or search into; to put a question, seek for information by questioning

- What do students know?
- What don't they know?
- What do students misunderstand?
- What are their past experiences?
- What do students want to know?
- What is the purpose of the lesson?
- How motivated are the students to learn the content?
- What are some practical reasons for students to participate in the lesson?

During this phase, you may want to use an icebreaker or **energizer** in your lesson. These are physically active games or other activities that increase group interaction, promote a sense of team, generate laughter and a sense of fun, and introduce the concept or lesson objectives.

### *Gather Phase*

After you determine the lesson's starting point, you are ready to help your students **gather** information about what they need to know about the subject matter. You want to be able to provide the students with the important facts and concepts so they may have a better understanding and/or improve their skills.

The purpose of gather phase is to research and collect information from a variety of sources, to synthesize information, to evaluate existing information, to collect data, to evaluate ideas, or to observe new skills. Some important questions you can ask during this phase are as follows:

- What new and essential information or new concepts did the students find?
- What are some new, critical skills?
- What connections or associations can be made?
- What can students do to make sense of the new information?
- What is the best way to gather the information?
- What new understandings can students construct?

### *Process Phase*

The third phase is called the **process** phase. The purpose of this phase is to use the new information, practice new skills, and engage in different activities. The following questions can help you and your students:

- What can students do with the information?
- How can students demonstrate their understanding?
- What ways can students show relationships among the data or concepts?
- How can students practice and improve their skill(s)?
- What can students do to reinforce their understanding of the new concept?
- How can students ensure the new information is stored in long-term memory?

#### *Key Note Terms*

**energizer** – someone or something that increased the capability of acting or being active

**gather** – to bring together; to pick up or accumulate; to assemble

#### *Key Note Term*

**process** – a natural phenomenon marked by gradual changes that lead to a particular result; a series of actions or operations conducted to an end

## Apply Phase

The purpose of the apply phase is to help students make real-life applications of the new information or ideas. Students can also consider ways to integrate the lesson concepts or skills with other curriculum areas. They also plan ways to transfer their learning into personal use outside the classroom. Questions that can help both the instructor and students during this phase are as follows:

- **What else can be done with the information?**
- **What else is needed to make the information usable?**

## The Three Components of Each Phase

There are three components that are common to each of the four phases in the lesson plan. They are direct student focus, learning activity, and reflection.

### Direct Student Focus

As a teacher, you have a responsibility to help your students **focus** on specific elements of the learning activity. You will guide their thought processes and help them focus on key processes or content during the learning activity. You will eliminate or filter extraneous information so students can direct their attention to what is critical for their learning.

For example, if the students watch a video, you will identify specific elements of the video on which to focus; if you have the students read a chapter in a book, you should list the details you expect them to extract from their reading; if the students do research on the Web, you can help clarify the research topics or important information needed from the research; and so on.

### Learning Activity

A learning activity may appear in many guises. As a teacher, you should plan activities that best present the information and allow students the opportunity to participate in the learning process. Teaching should be more than just standing in front of a class and writing on a board (see Figure 12.2.1).

If you are in the role of teacher, have students engage in active learning experiences that assess their current level of understanding of the lesson content, their level of interest in the lesson, and their goals for their own learning. Appropriate inquire phase learning activities are as follows:

- **Agree/disagree worksheets**
- **K-W-L charts**
- **Analogies or metaphors**
- **Prequizzes or pretests**
- **“Group” graph or “4-corners”**
- **Panel discussions**

#### Key Note Term

**focus** – a center of activity, attraction or attention; a point of concentration; directed attention



*Figure 12.2.1: Teaching is more than just writing on a board in front of a class.*  
Courtesy of Len Rubenstein/  
Index Stock Imagery.

- Debates
- Homework reviews
- Other

Appropriate gather phase activities are as follows:

- Graphic organizers
- Computer searches
- Jigsaw
- Interviewing experts
- Demonstrations
- Generating examples
- Socratic questioning
- Constructivist questions
- Other

Transference of information occurs during the learning activity. The student obtains information from you and fellow classmates and interacts with the new material. Practicing new skills helps the student evaluate the importance and

usefulness of the information and understand how it connects to other things they know. Students also have an opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of the lesson material. Appropriate process phase activities are as follows:

- Games
- Laboratory experiments
- Role-play
- Peer teaching
- Rehearsal
- Simulations
- Reciprocal teaching
- Graphic organizer
- Other

### Key Note Term

**facilitator** – one who leads a discussion

As the **facilitator**, you disseminate information, direct student activities, observe performance, and answer student questions.

Have students engage in active learning experiences (see Figure 12.2.2) that help them transfer the new information or skills outside the classroom. Ask students to consider ways that the new information can be applied to their everyday lives and how it connects to what they are learning in other classrooms. They can research the effectiveness of the new information or skills and evaluate their usefulness. Appropriate apply phase activities are as follows:

- Action research
- Field trips
- Interviews
- Portfolios

*Figure 12.2.2: Practical application and field trips are very effective in the learning process.*

Courtesy of Paul Mozell/  
Stock Boston.



- Student-designed homework activities
- Personal goals and objectives
- Creative connections
- Problem-based projects
- Other

## Reflection

As the teacher, ask questions that help students think about, reflect on, or make sense of their learning experiences. Having students discuss or write down what they understand helps them clarify their thinking and improve their understanding, as well as strengthen their memory connections. It is during this **reflection** process that students begin to understand the importance and purpose of the learning activity. Reflecting also helps the brain store the information into long-term memory.

The lesson plan is based on a learning model in which lecture and reading is minimized, and in which group discussion, learning by doing, and teaching others is emphasized. The template for each lesson is based on the student doing the following: inquiring (finding out what students already know); gathering information that introduces them to new ideas or skills; processing information or skills through learning activities; and then applying what they've learned into real life. In each of these four phases, students reflect on what they've learned, how they've learned it, and what they're going to do with it.

## National Standards

The JROTC curriculum fully or partially addresses a number of the McREL academic standards:

Citizenship	Health	Self-regulation
Civics	Language Arts	Thinking and Reasoning
Economics	Life Skills	U.S. History
Geography	Life Work	Working with Others

McREL is a nationally recognized, private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving education for all through applied research, product development, and service.

The purpose of the McREL standards project is “to address the major issues surrounding content standards, provide a model for their identification, and apply this model in order to identify standards and benchmarks in the subject areas.”

### Key Note Term

**reflection** – a thought, idea, or opinion formed or a remark made as a result of meditation; consideration for some subject matter, idea, or purpose



## Conclusion

For teachers, lesson plans are the building blocks used to help organize thoughts and information. The four-phase lesson plan was devised to facilitate the planning process. As you develop each phase of your lesson plan, remember to include the following components: direct student focus, learning activity, and reflection. If you are called on to instruct others, your audience will benefit from this well-organized approach.

Next you will learn about delivering instruction. You will learn the difference between lesson objectives and learning objectives, and learn to identify the five different types of learning exercises.

## Lesson Review

1. List the four lesson plan phases. Choose one and explain it.
2. What are the three components to each lesson plan phase?
3. Define the term *facilitator* and explain what a facilitator does.
4. What should a standardized lesson plan reflect?