Lesson plans for interactive virtual classrooms (Zoom)

Lesson plans are a strategy used by educators to map out the intentions and structure of a learning activity. In ordinary circumstances experienced educators teaching in their discipline don't need lesson plans. But these are not ordinary circumstances. You may be teaching in the virtual classroom (VC) for the first time or even teaching outside your specialty – this is when lesson planning can benefit you and your students.

What is a Lesson Plan?

The lesson plan is a statement of the aims and objectives of the session, and then a table with columns that describe the activity, the time allocation, resources required and any notes.

Objectives

Ask yourself what do you want your students to achieve from participating in the VC?

It is also important to consider if there are alternative ways to achieve the same outcome? At any time, but especially now, everyone's time is precious, and heads are full of coping with a new way of living. There's no

point running a VC if you are just conveying your learning content — do that in a pre-recorded video that can be watched whenever it suits your learners. Save your VC time for when it is important for your class to be together in the same room at the same time - so it can be a social learning activity. Using a lesson plan for your VC sessions really helps here as you can make sure you are not filling the time with 'teacher talk', but also allowing your students to speak. Remember this may be the only time that students can talk to each other, and they will be really missing that experience.

Before the virtual classroom

- Consider whether student microphones and/or webcams should be on or off. This can vary across the VC, sometimes starting with them all off, then allowing students to have them on for certain parts. Make a note of this in each section of your lesson plan.
- Add everything you want to share in the session (links, files etc) on your lesson plan.
- Will you be recording the VC? Add a reminder in your plan to turn this on (it is surprisingly easy to forget)!
- Clarify your expectations for the VC as part of the invitation/email to students. What do they need to do before the VC? What is the agenda for the meeting? For example, let students know if they will be in breakout rooms to discuss a topic and then reporting back before the session starts and they will be more likely to be prepared and willing to engage.
- You may find that you need to allow more time than you would in a face-to-face class to complete activities and perhaps include less activities than usual.

During the VC

- Start with some pastoral care (this is a challenging time for everybody)
- Move on to the VC agenda as a quick reminder

- Don't dominate the conversation – build in student talk time, with you and peer-to-peer discussions using the breakout tool.
- If you are using breakout sessions – schedule them for the second half of the session as it may be hard to include late-comers
- Pauses are great – build these into your plan to allow students to catch up their thoughts with yours
- Have a clear closing activity and action for what students should do next.

After the VC

- Check attendance
- Upload the recording to Panopto
- Add a summary of the VC in a forum, with a link to the recording/chat and reminders of what students should be doing next.

Interaction in a VC

- The body language cues in a face-to-face class can be replaced with the status icons in zoom. When you want students to react, plan for this by giving instructions to use the status icons.
- At least initially, as you and students adjust to online, slow the pace of the VC and don't try to cover too much in a single session.
- Silence truly is golden. Let students think!

Interaction ideas

- Polls - great for quick questions, opinions, ideas
- Annotate shared files/whiteboard - encourage collaboration through shared notes
- Brainstorm ideas- Use the chat and ask students to type their responses to a question or challenge. The chat can be used to summarise and follow-up in a forum on the learnonline site after the VC.

- Small group discussion and report back— using the breakout functionality. Here you can broadcast messages to the groups and visit students as they are working.
- Record a video demonstration for students to watch prior to the VC and then during the class ask pre-prepared questions where different groups think-pair-share real-world examples of what was demonstrated.

Remember, lesson plans are a guide that will help you get the most learning from your VC sessions – but they also may need to be adjusted on the fly when things don't go as expected.

If you would like to ask online teaching and learning questions related to your course, you can look through our FAQs, write to TIU@unisa.edu.au, have an online consultation with a member of the TIU, or complete the online modules (separately or all at once) in *Introduction to Engaging Learners Online.*

Resources

Finkelstein, JE 2006, Learning in Real Time: Synchronous Teaching and Learning Online., 1st ed.
<https://find.library.unisa.edu.au/permalink/f/14gpir7/TN_pq_ebook_centralEBC469387>

How to check attendance in a VC
https://lo.unisa.edu.au/mod/page/view.php?id=2002283

Breakout session https://lo.unisa.edu.au/mod/page/view.php?id=1815880

Credit Matt Huppatz

Aim of the session: To build community amongst students To share some preliminary visual and theoretical sources in preparation for Assessment 1 Time: 50 minutes		
Activity	**Time**	**Resources**
Pre-session: reminder email Email details of VC to all students with information about: • New platform (Zoom) • Information (links) on how to access the Zoom meeting • Ask students to prepare any questions they have about Assessment 1	2 days prior	Email Zoom link details
Pre-session: preparation Create Zoom activity under Virtual Classroom tab of course page. Title the activity Virtual Classroom: Contextualising Studio Practice Assessment 1 Introduction. Include: Zoom technical requirements video for first time Zoom users Ask students to prepare any questions they have about Assessment 1 Check Zoom meeting set-up by accessing Zoom meeting via Zoom profile (not via course page). Check setting for webcam and microphone Ensure the following are ready for screensharing: 1. Assessment 1 feedback form/marking rubric 2. Course page to demonstrate navigation to Assessment 1 submission link. Mute phones Do not disturb sign on the door	30 min prior to start	Sign Phone Webcam Microphone/Headset Help links
Start 1. Start recording: inform students that the session is now being recorded and where to find the link for the recording (Virtual classroom tab of the course page). 2. Welcome participants: • introduce myself • encourage participants to introduce themselves via Chat • outline the aim / objective for lesson: • to discuss the first assessment and answer questions • encourage students to add questions to the chat • ask students to mute microphone when not speaking to reduce feedback	5 mins	Recording button Gallery view Chat

Navigation: Rubric and Feedback • Share view of course page • Locate Assessments tab • Click on Assessments tab. Scroll to Assignment 1 • Click on Course Essentials block and show the Feedback forms/rubric link. • Explain rubric assessment criteria • Answer questions	5 min	Share screen Course page
Breakout rooms for discussion (2-3 students per room, based on attendance) • Briefly explain the activity and ask students to talk about their selected image and theoretical text • Activate breakouts • Return to main room and discuss their approaches, what they learnt from each another	6-10 min	Chat whiteboard
Navigation: Referencing • Share view of course page • Locate Resources tab • Click on Resources tab. Scroll to Referencing section • Click on referencing link and show the UniSA Chicago Referencing Guide • Answer questions	5 min	Share screen Course page
Breakout rooms for discussion (2-3 students per room, based on attendance) • Briefly explain the referencing activity and ask students to talk about their selected image and theoretical text • Activate breakouts • Return to main room and discuss their approaches, what they learnt from each another	6-10 min	Chat whiteboard
Q&A Time for students to ask any questions they have about Assessment 1	10 Min	Microphone and/or chat
Wrap up and close • Thank participants for their time and engagement • Recap key points and revisit the outcomes • Stop recording – state where the recording link will be posted on the course page • Export chat	5 min	Recording button
Post-session • Upload recording to Panopto. • Add URL to Virtual Classroom tab in the Zoom VC description. • Reflect on outcomes - adjust lesson plan and teaching notes to improve the iteration	After session 15 min	

Credit Rebekah Das

Aim of the session: To introduce a method to improve efficiency of reading research articles To practice using this method to improve confidence in critique of research Time: 60 minutes		
Activity	**Time**	**Resources**
Pre-session • Print plan- note times for each activity based on the actual start time of the session • Do not disturb note on the door. • Mute phones. • Change webcam settings to allow participants to share video.	Before session	Sign Phone Microphone Print out of lesson plan
Start At the beginning of meeting time - welcome participants -introduce myself	1 min	Gallery view
Recording sessions Switch on recording. Select to record local file. Inform participants that the session is now being recorded and where a link to the recording will appear.	1 min	
Icebreaker Run Poll 1 with participants - when was the last time they critically analysed a research article? Which is your favourite part of an article to read? Rate confidence in research appraisal. Rate confidence in applying to practice. If not available then share link in chat Collect responses and broadcast	3 min	Poll 1 Can even do with feedback in learnonline
Large group discussion - How to critique and article: Who, When and Where" • Share screen with PDF of article (with ability to make notes, highlight etc.). • Go through where in the article this information is found. • Ask participants to volunteer to share their screen and demonstrate finding the information	10 min	Article in PDF with highlighting function Share screen
Small group discussion breakout session • Introduce break out session activity "What and How". Discuss where in the article to find this information • Introduce checklists that can be used to itemise information included in the 'What' section • Ask participants to highlight their own version of the PDF (or their own hard copy) as they identify information • Ask participants to write their responses to each of the TIDier checklists items as they find them • "Drop in" to each group to check progress and answer questions	15 min	Notes on the "What and How' sections TIDier Checklist Annotated article

• End the breakout session by asking all groups to return.		
Poll 2 • Run poll 2 to check if participants have found the correct information in the article • Poll items to include TIDier items related to the intervention, items regarding the length of the intervention period and time-points at which OM were taken and which OM were used in the research • Collect responses and broadcast • Provide feedback on any errors	5 min	Poll 2
Large group discussion Participants discuss what limitations they identified in the reporting of the intervention or choice of outcome measures. Use whiteboard to make general notes as group discusses.	10 min	Share screen with whiteboard Notes of limitations to prompt if they do not come up in the discussion
Demonstration • Introduce the concept of "Why" and where this is found. Introduce the "last line of the background" rule and test in 2 different papers. • Share screen to show introduction of 2 papers and ask someone to paraphrase the 'why' for each paper. • Introduce how to read 1st line of each paragraph to glean main ideas. Participants to take turns reading out first line of each paragraph in introduction and discussion and paraphrasing what they think the idea is that will be covered in that paragraph.	5 min	Share screen
Wrap up • Stop recording - say again where url will be posted (lesson plan wiki, news forum) • Thank participants for their engagement - recap the experiences of large and small group discussions, revisit the initial poll and encourage practice with module articles.	5 min	
Post session Upload local recording to Panopto. Share url in news forum. Reflect on outcomes - adjust lesson plan and resources to improve the next offering of this session	After session	