Writing a session plan

Every engaging digital skills session is based upon a well thought out session plan. The session plan details the who, what, where, why and how of your session. It is a bit like putting a recipe together. You will need the ingredients, equipment and a method — or in this case, a session plan. The information below outlines the key components of a session plan.

What is a session plan?

A session plan is a tool for digital mentors and is designed to teach people about a specific learning objective or goal. The session plan is made up of components including learning activities, games and resources that the digital mentor will use.

Session Name

Think about an engaging yet concise name for your session.

The title of your session needs to relate directly to the topic you plan on teaching. Whilst that may seem obvious, some people try to be too creative with their titles and learners then do not know what the session is about. In order to gain a learner's attention and to actively encourage them to explore what you are offering, you need to make sure the Session Name is short, but also reflects the subject you will be teaching.

Session Overview

Create a brief description of your session (The why).

The session overview is a brief description of what the learner can expect to learn from your session. It could include the topics, activities, guest speakers or presentations you plan on using in your session. Include a sentence or two that details what will happen in the session. Use action words to describe what the learner can expect in the session. For example, "how to" or "help you to understand" are useful as the learner knows what is being offered and can decide if it is something they wish to attend. Some examples of how to use action words are below:

- **How to:** In this session you will learn **how to** download an app
- **Explore:** This session offers the opportunity for learners to **explore** the privacy setting available to them on their own device.
- **Share, Explain:** The guest presenter will **share** their own experience and **explain** the best practises they have incorporated into their work.

TOP TIP: Generating a catchy sentence to highlight the session overview can also be used in the marketing of your session. This gains the attention of potential learners and often translates to increased attendance numbers.

Learning objectives

Time to think about the learning outcomes (The what).

Learning objectives are statements that are focussed on learner outcomes. They should cover the knowledge, skills or attitudes the learner will be able to demonstrate after they have attended your session.

Using the SMARTER acronym helps to provide a framework when creating clear and concise learning objectives. The SMARTER acronym stands for:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Achievable

R = Relevant

T = Timely

E = Evaluate

R = Revise

An example of a non SMARTER learning objective may be:

To learn how to use my new ipad, download and install Zoom and start using it to connect with my grandchildren.

TOP TIP: Some learners may find this learning objective a bit overwhelming which makes it hard for them to successfully master. Break the learning topics up into smaller chunks. This will assist in developing specific, realistic and achievable learning objectives for you to us

An example of SMARTER learning objectives may be:

By the end of the session, I will be able to turn on and off my iPad, as well as navigate my way around it including opening a few applications.

By the end of the session, I will be able to confidently download and install Zoom on my iPad.

TOP TIP: By breaking the learning objective up into specific topic areas and adding a timeframe, you achieve a SMARTER learning objective. Once you have delivered the session, revisit the learning objective and session plan to evaluate and revise it if required.

Target Audience

Identify your learners (The who).

Your target audience is who your digital skills session will be aimed at. These could be your existing learners, new learners with no prior digital skills or knowledge or other groups in your community. Knowing your target audience will help you to create the session plan and decide on what activities and resources to include.

Delivery Mode

Consider what is the best way to deliver your session (The where).

Delivery mode means how you will be delivering your session. Traditionally, learning sessions were delivered face to face in a physical venue. These days with technology being more accessible to the wider community, adopting a virtual delivery mode is fast becoming popular. You may even like to consider a blended style of delivery which incorporates a little bit of both.

There are many benefits to each type of delivery mode. It is up to you to decide which mode will best suit the material you will be delivering and the types of learning activities you will include.

Suggested session length

Timing can be finite or flexible (The when).

This is an approximation of the time it takes to deliver the session in full. Depending on your availability after the session and the level of engagement from the learners, you may wish to stay longer to answer questions. Session length generally includes a break for the participants.

Prior to the session

Useful information to add if you need to prepare your learners for your session.

This is not essential, but include if you need the learners to complete an activity before they attend your session. For example, reading a hand out or completing a pre-session questionnaire.

Prior knowledge

The building blocks for future learning.

This is important to add if you need your learners to have a certain level of knowledge or skills.

For example, if your learner can create a document, then consider building upon this skill by teaching them how to attach it to an email.

TOP TIP: Incorporating the learner's existing knowledge and skills base into your session helps to reinforce what they already know and boosts their confidence when learning new material.

Section

Identify the key topic areas of your session.

Once you know what it is you plan on teaching, then you need to break it down into smaller pieces or key topic areas. This will help to keep your learners motivated and challenged, and helps to prevent them from feeling overwhelmed by too much information.

Timing

Each section will have a different time allocated.

Depending upon the material you present, the activities or the assessments you include, each section will reflect a different time. Most importantly, include a time for a break so your learners can stretch their legs and make a cuppa.

Activity

Provides information on what you wish to deliver in each section and how.

In this component you should include the details of what it is you are specifically teaching and how you will be doing it. Will you be presenting the material, using discussions, show and tell, or watching videos? This information will help to keep you on track during your delivery.

TOP TIP: Use a variety of fun learning activities to keep your learners engaged. Activities that are hands on and provide the learner with the opportunity to give it a go is ideal. This also helps you to address the different learning styles within your group.

Assessment

Consider the best way to assess your learners.

Assessments will help to determine if your session has made a positive difference in your learners' knowledge and skill level. Think about how you can check the learners' understanding of the material you have presented. Mini quizzes, trivia style games, demonstration of skills and participation in discussions are all great ways to assess your learners that keep your session fun.

Resources

The tools for making the session happen.

This part of the session plan is used to note down what tools or equipment you will need for each section of your session. Common items such as IT equipment, power boards, extension cords, laptop, learner handouts, assessment tools are included here.

Sample session plan

To help you get started, we have a [session plan template](#) that you can download from the Be

Connected Network website in the Resources section, under 'Delivering your programs'.

Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below to download the resource.

Remember!

Session plans help to share your expertise with your learners. Be creative in your session plans so people enjoy learning digital skills. Keep it light and fun by avoiding technical jargon.