

Knowledge Transfer

Voices That Work

EDITED BY CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM

Module 4

Best Practice in Lesson Planning for
Bespoke / Client Focused Training

BY EMMA BROWN

The full list of modules available are:

Module 1

"An Introduction to Voice" Basic Voice Exercises – by Kate Pringle

Module 2

The Universal / Generic Voice – by Veronica Allardice

Module 3

An Example of Good Practice: "The Reflective Practitioner" – by John Tucker
Derived from "Female to male transgender project" Spring 2006

Module 4

Best Practice in Lesson Planning for Bespoke / Client Focused Training – by Emma Brown

Module 5

The Importance of Spoken English Skills Training in the Business Setting – by Phil Bliss

Module 6

Pitching Voice Work to the Business Client – by Phil Bliss

Module 7

"An Introduction to Voice" Basic Voice Exercises – by Kate Pringle
Creating Environments that Support Sustainable Learning – by Nick Owen

Module 8

Performance Skills for the Non-Performer – by Emma Brown.

Introduction

The ability to communicate effectively in all areas of our lives can be dependant upon how confident we are as users of our voice. As individuals we possess a broad array of skills and talents but the inability to get our thoughts, our feelings, our desires and our messages across effectively to our “audiences” can hold us back. The ability to retrain our own voices and the voices of others can be challenging, empowering and creatively very exciting.

In the article that follows, an experienced voice and professional development trainer offers advice on techniques and strategies that will allow you to develop your own style of training to be most effective for the groups you are working with. We hope that by studying and putting into practice the approaches described, you will be able to enable your trainees/learners/clients to benefit from coaching that is integrated into personal and professional development programmes.

There are some important messages and caveats to bear in mind as you approach the material and work practically on your own voice and the voices of others. The following is a bullet point list of things to consider when you begin to integrate elements of voice coaching into your practice.

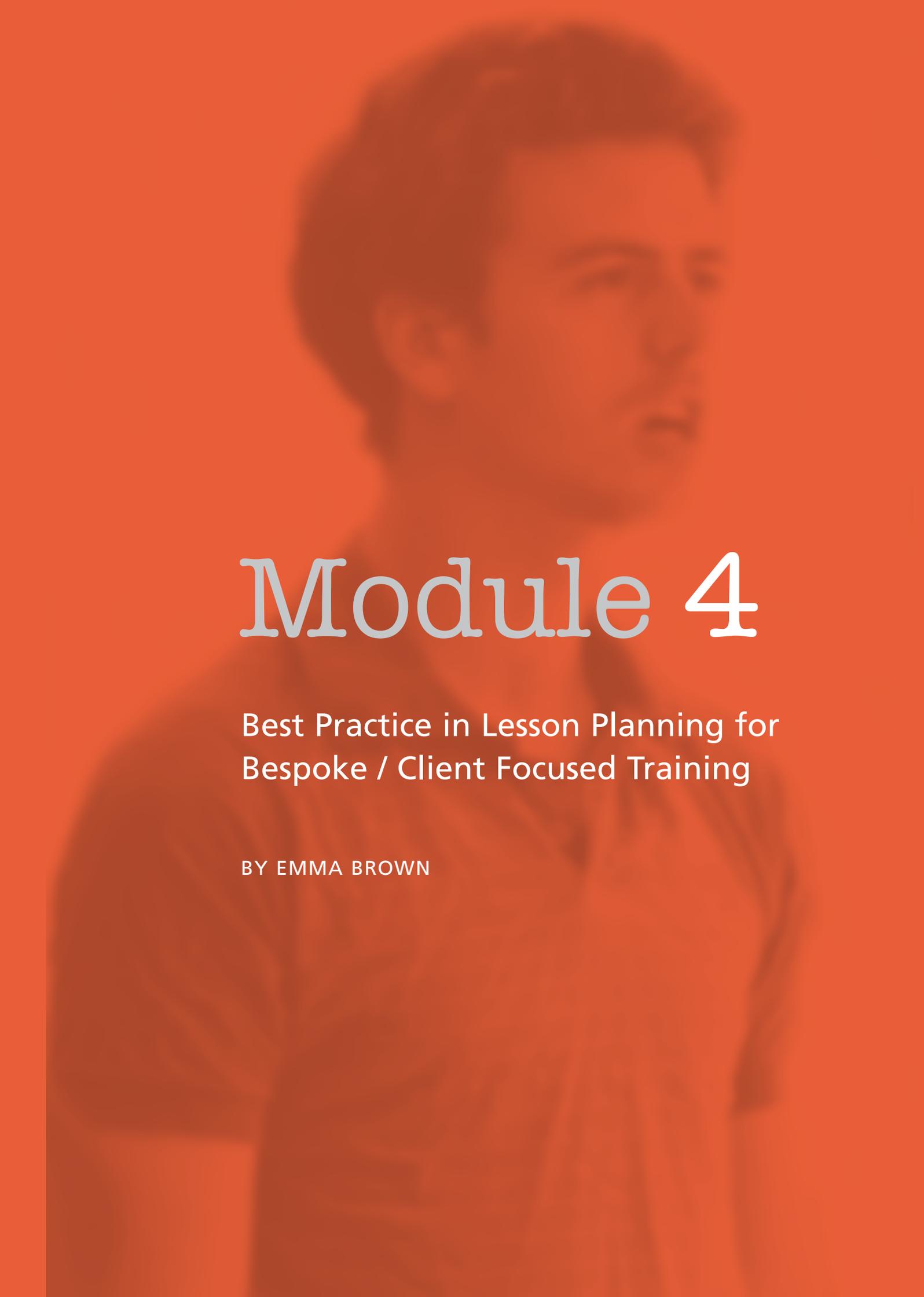
1. **Accessibility** – An understanding of the voice and the physical and psychological factors that effect how well we communicate is accessible to all trainers and can be incorporated into any training delivery. However, professional voice coaches undergo a significant amount of training. It is recommended that the practitioner undergo specific training before seeking work as a “voice coach”.
2. **Health and Safety** – Voice training is a physical process. As such, you must ensure that the health and safety of your group is supported. Those whose voice is damaged by prolonged misuse should be referred to a medical professional or speech therapist in the first instance.

3. **Making it your Own** – The theory and practice of voice training has been evolving for many years. There are no perfect or ideal exercises for any one group or situation. Take the exercises you think would work for you and make them your own.
4. **Being Patient** – The way we speak and communicate is hard wired by our experience. The muscles of speech and some of our thought processes therefore must be retrained. This process will take time and may happen in small increments or larger steps. Make sure you record progress and keep your trainees moving forward through feedback and encouragement.
5. **Reflecting on your Practice** – As a trainer, it is important that you reflect on your methods of delivery, how you connect with your training groups and what works/what doesn't. Again, take the material presented and use it so it suits your own development as a trainer to the benefit of your learners.

Approaching the Material

- > All modules contain questions to prompt reflection and discussion of issues raised in the text.
- > Symbols in the margin show where listening (ear) speaking (mouth) and physical (body) exercises are featured.
- > If you wish to obtain other modules in this series of articles about voice training, please refer to other titles shown in the inside front cover and contact kt@cssd.ac.uk for copies.

If you have any questions or comments about the material or ideas presented, please contact Charlie Cunningham or Paul Nicholl at The Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD) on 0207 559 3936 or email kt@cssd.ac.uk.

A blurred, high-angle photograph of a man in a dark suit and tie, looking slightly to the right. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter, which serves as the background for the text.

Module 4

Best Practice in Lesson Planning for
Bespoke / Client Focused Training

BY EMMA BROWN

Introduction

... *"If you decide on lamb," Charlotte Angus said to Larry one week before his dinner party, "you really ought to serve beans".*

"Why beans? No one likes beans. At least no one I know".

"That's how they serve lamb in France. Very rare, pink in the middle, and with white beans. It's traditional. Or those lima beans. You can buy frozen ones."

"Beans are indigestible".

"Big piles of beans are indigestible. You're absolutely right. The thing is to serve just a few beans alongside the meat. More of a garnish, really, than a serving."

"How many is too few? Twelve beans? Twenty..."

(Shields, 1998:293)

Larry's attempts to plan an appropriate menu for a mixed group of friends, past and present lovers and ex wives involve a careful mix of strategy and creativity. Not too much spice, nor tongue curling sugar. Indeed, at dinner parties such as these, perhaps the mantra 'bland is best' offers the greatest hope of avoiding conflict inducing indigestion. If you apply this metaphor to the theoretical landscape of teaching and learning it may seem that educational experiences are created in an atmosphere of moderation where the needs of all participants are considered in the process of devising the learning menu. Through the creation of Escalate, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) has begun to commission a range of research projects, which locates the science of lesson planning at the heart of the teaching and learning process. The HEA's mission is "to help institutions, discipline groups and all staff to provide the best possible learning experience for all students."

In policy terms, greater focus on life long learning and enriched pathways for 14 – 19 education (as gateways to increased participation in HE) have created renewed interest in pedagogical research within both FE and HE sectors. The reflective practitioner considers the needs of the client group and plans accordingly. Consequently, concepts such as differentiation and learning outcomes which might traditionally be seen as the preserve of hard-pressed school teachers are now infiltrating the language of teaching and learning in Higher Education. Significantly there are also emerging debates around assessment methodologies with tangential implications for access and the diversity of learners working in any one group.

Rigorous yet sensitive delivery places the learner at the heart of the educational transaction. It is, however, fair to suggest that the demands of a litigious, pluralistic society may nudge the teacher to plan a series of generic outcomes with sufficient support mechanisms and publishable assessment criteria but less of a sense of personalised learning. At a time when practitioners are getting to grips with widening participation strategies in all types of HE institutions, it is the contention of this training guide that the most effective learning experience remains one which is sourced, planned and prepared by a teacher of passionate commitment with both generic and individual learning outcomes in mind. Where it is possible to fuse these intentions, learning might become more easily transferable and personally resonant.

What is a lesson plan?

A lesson plan is a structure which exists to support the teacher in delivering both subject specific knowledge and appropriate skills and abilities. It serves to fulfil a series of clear learning aims and objectives. In the same way as analysis of a map yields a set of directions to enable the traveller to reach a destination, a lesson plan supports the teacher in their attempts to navigate the learner through a new domain of knowledge towards new understanding. Planning usually sets out time frames during which lessons and groups of lessons are delivered. Whilst, a 'scheme of work (SOW) sets out the long – term plans for learning and thus covers an extended period of time' (Capel, Leask and Turner, 2001: 67), the lesson plan provides a map for the immediate unit of learning which has been extracted from the scheme of work.

What are its functions?

As an apprentice in the art of learning, the student observes the teacher model learning. Areas of subject knowledge are both explained and explored as the student is moved towards a position of shared authority and joint practise. The plan should scaffold the timeframe of the lesson in such a way as to make sense of the sequence of learning activities. Tripartite lesson structures adopted by the DfES during the training and dissemination phase of National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (NLS, NNS) in both primary and secondary school sectors are now commonly regarded as good practise in many educational settings. In this structure the plan builds learning through a series of cumulative activities:

Title	Function	The Learner...
Starter activity	Provides an opportunity to consolidate prior learning. Establishes aims and objectives. (Re)Introduces the language of the domain.	Is reminded... Is engaged... Is motivated...
Main activities: Development phase	Introduces ideas. Explores concepts. Provides opportunities for working in various group sizes. Is aware of learning styles and preferences.	Is energised. Is saturated with language. Works in different ways.
Plenary	Learning is summarised. Ideas are debated and some conclusions discussed. Links are made with the sequence of learning activities. Knowledge is brought together.	Evaluates. Summarises. Is inspired to continue learning Is clear of learning outcomes.

In short, the plan helps the teacher to deliver knowledge and understanding and the learner to reach the same end point of the journey by working within the most appropriate framework for learning.

What are the features of the effective lesson plan?

Arguably, a lesson plan is only as effective as the Scheme of Work (or Unit of Study from which it is drawn). If the teacher has access to clear and relevant information about the demographics of the group, it is possible that the lesson can be tailored to deliver appropriate knowledge and understanding for its learners. Where such information is not available, the lesson plan will inevitably become more generic and its aims less tailored. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify certain features of an effective plan:

- Clear aims and objectives – matched to long and medium term plans (SOW)
- Sufficient, well organised resources to enable the learning of every participant
- A range of teaching strategies – including group and pair work as appropriate
- Clear sense of assessment methods and various modes of assessment
- Clear sense of a range of monitoring strategies
- Opportunities for evaluation
- Response to individual needs (differentiation)
- Clear time structure (and a sense of pace)
- Reference to wider, independent learning opportunities

When setting lesson objectives, Capel, Leask and Turner advocate the use of clear language, forcing you to ‘write statements which can be tested’:

Defining objectives which clarify exactly what learning you hope will take place is a crucial skill for the effective teacher. It helps you to be clear about exactly what the [students] should be achieving and it helps the [students] understand what they should be doing. (2001: 70)

Words which might be helpful include: **state, describe, list, identify, prioritise, solve, demonstrate an understanding of, gather, consider, discuss**. The more focused your instructions are, the more likely learners will be able to achieve the aims and objectives which you have set. The aims of the lesson indicate the broad philosophical base of the plan, the general purpose of your lesson, for example, “The lesson will give students an understanding of how the voice is like a musical instrument in terms of resonance and harmonics.”. Objectives are more specific and indicate a set of actions to be carried out, for example “Identify the key resonating spaces of the vocal tract.” Or “Be able to open the lower ribs for breath support.” According to Capel, Leask and Turner, ‘Objectives may be related to knowledge, concepts, skills, behaviours and attitudes’.

There is different terminology in use – some people refer to behavioural objectives, some to learning objectives. These are the same things and they refer to the observable outcomes of the lesson, i.e to what [students] are expected to be able to do. (2001: 7)

How can the client's needs be placed at the heart of the lesson plan?

The cycle of planning, development and evaluation is based on a clear sense of the needs of the student/client. What kind of needs could be facilitated?

- Physical: Specified range of mobility needs
- Learning Styles: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic (see Gardner, 1993, 1997, 2001, and Kolb 1976; 1981; 1984)
- Vocational context: Work-based learning, collaboration and team structures
- Career progression: linked to objectives in professional development plan
- Dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia

Differentiated planning operates on the principle that each learner requires activities which will be most stimulating for their engagement and development. The importance of gathering appropriately detailed contextual information is clearly emphasised here. When operating in group work scenarios it is possible to address the needs of individuals by using peer support strategies, so matching individuals with others who will support their own learning styles. In the light of the life long learning agenda advocated by organisations such as the National Independent Association for Continuing Education (NIACE), teachers are expected to organise their lessons to 'maximise the potential of all [students] in their [groups], to differentiate to meet the needs of [students] and ensure progression in learning'. Achieving differentiation is clearly a highly sophisticated task. It is clearly at the micro level of planning specific activities that students' needs can be best met. In this context the pace and timing of the lesson are both crucial. Aim to allow sufficient time for students to consider their own learning meta – cognitively e.g. with awareness of their own preferred learning styles (See Wragg, 2004: 83 – 85).

How can you support the client to continue their learning and develop independent study?

Reflecting on the significance of teaching thinking skills, Gerald Smith (2004) asks 'is there a substantial body of important material (concepts, principles, skills and so forth) that is general (broadly applicable to practical affairs and various disciplinary domains) and which could be taught in such a way that students would be able to transfer and apply their knowledge in other relevant contexts?' Smith promotes a clearer understanding of 'generic thinking skills' which can be taught 'apart from any domain specific context' (Smith, 2004: 199 – 20). In the light of this debate it is important that teachers engaged in the act of planning for short, medium or long term delivery should consider the extent to which they are implementing activities which will encourage students to become reflective practitioners. The American academic David Schon has written extensively in this area and been hugely influential in trying to propose a model of learning which is able to engage with the phenomenon being observed/taught whilst pausing to consider the experience unfolding. (1983). Sometimes described as 'thinking on our feet', reflective practice involved 'looking to our experiences, connecting with our feelings, and attending to our theories in use. It entails building new understandings to inform our actions in the situation that is unfolding'. (Smith, 2001). Thinking skills include the following:

- Identifying assumptions
- Transferring examples
- Ability to determine relevant facts
- Evaluate alternatives
- Understand and process instructions
- Construct counter arguments
- Constructing a critique
- Perceive and respond to irony
- Asking questions (see de Bono's work on 'attention directors', 1982)

It is possible to incorporate opportunities to develop and enhance these skills through the design of small group activities and tasks. Students might for example be given a set of case studies to examine and asked to determine the relevant facts, critique the range of information given and construct a response. In order to extend their learning and encourage independent learning students might also be given research focused tasks which ask them to engage with recommended texts (a reading list or suggested bibliography) or produce a response to an activity covered in 'class time', for example the preparation of a presentation, production of an article, composition of a piece of analytical writing etc. The most important factor to consider is whether you are asking the learner to extend their domain-specific knowledge and understanding and develop the skills in their 'cognitive repertoire'.

Potential issues arising during the planning process and possible solutions

Teachers working in all educational sectors are often faced with the same issues and problems when engaged in the planning process. Working in a client focused way allows teachers to avoid the problems faced by teachers who do not know their students' needs in advance; bespoke training by definition implies a method of planning which is tailored to the needs of the student. Clearly this places the teacher in the position of needing to gather appropriate data to ascertain these needs. Information gathering should include some or all of the following sources:

- Demographic data – gender, age, ethnicity of the student
- Previous life and work experience
- Previous education (particularly level and expectations)
- Plans for future professional development (professional development plan)
- Additional relevant skills/training

A second danger concerns the timing and pace of the lesson. Potentially, the trainer might consider that activities which appear to be straight forward in design need little time to execute. However, bearing in mind the previous discussion about thinking skills it is important not to plan too many activities in order to allow sufficient time to develop the skills of reflection. Use of a learning journal might offer students a means of recording their responses to experiences as they happen. If in doubt, for an hour's lesson with a group of six students, aim to work through a maximum of 4 learning activities.

Ensuring that the session is appropriately resourced and the area sufficiently well equipped will inspire confidence in both teachers and learners. When planning the range and scope of activities try to ensure that you allow sufficient time to prepare resources and/or gather material or equipment. If there is any doubt about whether you are able to deliver a resource/organise equipment, you should adjust the exercise. Contingency plans are always useful, especially when ICT resources are planned!

Finally, you should aim to integrate assessment opportunities with the needs of the learner fully in mind. The results of assessments are arguably only as good as the information provided in the briefing paper. When planning the sequence of activities in the session, try to consider that learners may be anxious about the assessment opportunities facing them and that explicit signposting of both criteria and the requirements of the task will help ease any tension in the room.

Summary and Conclusion

Good practise in lesson planning and delivery are strongly linked both to the confidence levels of the trainer, and the degree to which the trainer has considered the various elements of a well structured session.

The relationship between the practitioner and the student is often determined by the learning outcome which in itself is a product of the interplay between the aims and objectives of the session and the progress made by the participants. Teachers are variously described as 'arbiters' of knowledge, deconstructors of experience and facilitators. Commenting specifically on early year's settings, Janet Moyles suggests that 'the ability to reflect on and evaluate practice, prescription and one's own thoughts about it must be the key to professionalism....However change takes time while, paradoxically practice is grounded in an immediacy of response and reaction which is unsympathetic to achieving depth in professional thinking and vision, and 'magic' in teaching and learning' (Moyles in Wragg, 2004: 20). The luxury of lengthy planning time is not always granted to teachers, but it is certainly possible to put in place strategies which will help to generate templates to use as a coping mechanism for detailed delivery. In the appendices which follow, there are exemplars which might be adapted to the context in which learning is due to take place.

Appendices

- 1. Scheme of Work Template for planning a sequence of sessions**
- 2. Lesson Plan Template**

Using the following scheme of work and then the lesson plan template, plan a 5 week learning experience for your clients. Try to deepen your teaching and make the work client-focused.

HE Scheme of Work	Title	Group	Links with Course aims and objectives	Resources	ICT
Aims: why do this scheme?			Objectives: what will students have learnt and be able to do by the end? How shall I know this? How will students know this?	Key/Core Competencies (see LLL matrix)	
Week by week overview of content. This must evidence continuity and progression					
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	
Independent Study	Independent Study	Independent Study	Independent Study	Independent Study	Key Outcomes
Assessment Details					
Assessment Deadlines					

Session Plan			
What objectives from the whole scheme of work/course are students working towards in this lesson?:			
Outcomes: What do I want the students to learn? How will I know what the students have learned/achieved? How will the students know what they have learned? (Map to course/unit objectives)			
Timing	Activity	Group size	Learning objectives
Starter Activity			
Learning Activities			
Plenary			
Independent Study			

	Differentiation: Specific Provision	Resources	Opportunities for monitoring and/or assessment?

Notes

23. In February 2002, the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) reviewed the arrangements for supporting the enhancement of quality in learning and teaching in higher education. The Higher Education Academy was formed in May 2004 from a merger of 3 predecessor bodies (including the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education ILTHE)
24. Established in 2004, Lifelong Learning UK is the 'Sector Skills Council responsible for the professional development of all those working in community learning and development; further education; higher education; libraries archives and information services; and work based learning. Its mission is to 'create a UK partnership of employers to lead the professional development of all those working in the field of lifelong learning.' (www.lifelonglearninguk.org)
25. Development and use of the term Reflective Practitioner together with the growth of Institute's of Education in the Higher Education sector demonstrate that the quality assurance and standards agenda is driving investment in pedagogical research. HE minister Bill Rammell has been recorded as suggesting that 'there has never been a better time for students to go to university.' (see www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway)
26. The Literacy Task Force, led by Michael Barber was established in May 1996. Its purpose was to develop a strategy for 'substantially raising standards of literacy in primary schools in England over the next five to ten years. A key element of the strategy was the expectation that from September 1998 all primary schools in England would teach the literacy hour. The NLS strategy was launched in July 1997 and overseen by the Standards and Effectiveness Unit of the DFES. (www.literacytrust.org.uk)
The National Numeracy Strategy

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Questions:

1. Effective lesson planning is a skill that develops over time. What are the 3 most important strategies that you could integrate into your own teaching initially?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
2. How could you encourage a group you are working with to engage in reflective practice through effective lesson planning?
3. Lesson planning should serve the practitioner to make their job easier. How might you adjust the lesson plan shown to suit your own needs?

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'Emma Brown is Senior Lecturer in Drama Education at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Based within a large and thriving postgraduate school, her specific responsibilities include course leadership of both the long established PGCE Drama course and the newly inaugurated MA Theatre Studies in London course. After ten years of teaching Drama across the 11 – 19 age range in a variety of educational settings, Emma made a transition in research and academic scholarship within Higher Education where her research specialisms include Creativity and the Curriculum and Continuing Professional Development in the cultural sector. Most recently Emma has undertaken consultancy work for Creative Partnerships in both the North West and East Midlands considering models of training which bring arts professionals together with teachers.

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