

Top 10 Common Mistakes when Adapting Lesson Plans

1. **Scrapping the lesson plan altogether.** GA's courses are thoughtfully designed through market research and an agile development process led by seasoned instructional designers. We encourage you to bring your personality and experience to the course, but certain things are designed in a sequence. Learning objectives, homework assignments, and projects cannot change.
2. **Winging it, the day of.** Thinking you can 'wing it' based on the template materials provided by GA ignores half of the lesson preparation process. To deliver an engaging lesson, you'll need to add your own talking points, anecdotes, checks for understanding, and practice your presentation style.
3. **Forgetting to announce, write, and review the learning objectives.** Just clicking through a slide with some objectives isn't sufficient. Students aren't aware of the master plan unless you tell them, remind them, and refer back to the master plan as you check skills off.
4. **Thinking you don't need to practice delivering instructions.** Clearly identifying what students are supposed to do, how they should do it, and the parameters (time, if work will be shared) of the activity helps everyone succeed. Not identifying these things leads to confusion and wasted time.
5. **Not using or not using effective Checks for Understanding.** "Does that make sense?" "Everybody with me?" or even repeated, one to many questioning where only one student answers DO NOT CUT IT. You must ask all students to interact with the material to gauge understanding effectively. Plus, we have a ready-made list of tactics ([Checking for Understanding Techniques](#)) for you to use!
6. **Skiping the guided practice ("We Do") activity to 'save time' or present more content via lecture.** Lecturing does not give students the opportunity to practice the skills themselves. Adults need to interact with material to learn.
7. **Forgetting to debrief the activity.** You are facilitating the learning experience. This means that, after students try out new skills in an activity, they'll be looking to you to help them debrief the experience & cement their learning by processing key takeaways.
8. **Thinking students don't need you to recap the learning objectives at the end.** Students need to be reminded what they just learned. Chances are, you've spent all of class diving into the details. The end is a perfect time to link back to the goals of the lesson. It's also a great way to check for understanding and preview homework.
9. **Opting out of doing Exit Tickets.** The goal of exit tickets is to provide instructors with real-time information about their class from the people who matter most - their students! Not giving out exit tickets OR failing to reserve time for students to complete exit tickets during class hinders your own ability to get feedback, improve, and keep a real-time pulse on student sentiment. Sending exit tickets *after* a class has finished rather than having students complete them in class is not the correct way to use them.
10. **Leaving your personality and professional experience at the door.** Students are interested in taking the class because of what you'll bring to it. Sure, standard objectives, homework assignments, and projects ensure that all students will gain the same skills as a result of the course, but when was the last time that you loved a course for the material only? Bringing your experiences, anecdotes, and unique spin on the topic helps students relate and stay engaged!