

Some general hints and tips

General principles

- As a 'rule of thumb', **you should not spend longer on planning a session than it will take to deliver** (i.e. a one hour session should not take longer than an hour to plan).
- Obviously your **first few** sessions will take longer than this to plan, but this should be your aim.
- Start with your **learning aims/objectives** – what do you want them to know by the end of the session?
- **Questioning** – think about the questions you want to ask **before the session** – make them part of your session plan. Ask a **range of types** of question. Try to use 'no hands up' to stop some students from dominating the session. Remember to give students thinking time before asking for answers (this is very difficult and takes confidence and practice).

Ways of organising groups

Small **group work** can be really useful (stimulating discussion, everyone having a chance to contribute etc) but needs to be constructed very carefully. E.g. size of group – needs to be small enough for there not to be hiding places. Anything over four or five means some can opt out. Ideas for encouraging full participation:

- **Give set number of points** to each group (e.g. 10) and at the end of the task instruct them to allocate them fairly around the group to reflect the amount of effort that each member put in.
- **Allocate roles** (leader, time keeper, recorder etc.) so that everyone has something to do – make sure there are enough roles for everyone to have one.
- **'Wheel of names'** website – students can see their names 'wheel of fortune' style and see that they're being selected in a fair way.

Ways of evaluating activities or checking understanding

Introduce a topic with a **key question** – **revisit** at the end of the lesson (could use an opinion line, see below, to illustrate views of class). Good for showing students what they have learnt, how far they have come.

Use **traffic lights** idea to get students to show you how confident they are with a topic (they will be used to this from other lessons) – red, orange and green, or thumbs up, flat or down, or smiley, neutral and sad faces, or using emojis on the keyboard – you could record this at the start of a session and redo at the end, to see if progress has been made (a very simple evaluation). Good for you to see where problems lie, and for students to communicate their learning.

Other considerations when working with school groups:

- Thinking time during questioning – count to (at least) 5 in your head before choosing someone to answer a question.

- Open Vs Closed questioning – there are pros and cons of both; consider working questioning into your planning.
- Humour goes a long way!
- Assume no prior knowledge about your subject, unless you have been told beforehand.
- Can you show anything apart from a PowerPoint (or similar) to the students? Using all senses helps students access what they are being told about.
- Rewards work wonders! Friendly competition, verbal praise.
- Any connections to the real world can help students to understand what’s being delivered.

Top Tips

- Be prepared for the **unexpected!**
- Have a **back-up plan:**
 - IT
 - Activities
 - Student Ambassadors
 - Extension task(s)
- Go with the flow – attendees may not notice things that go wrong.
- Enjoy yourself!

