

Planning Lessons

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- Lesson planning is the art of combining a number of different elements into a coherent whole so that a lesson has an identity which students can recognize, work within, and react to --- whatever metaphor teachers may use to visualize and create that identity.
- Plans, which help teachers identify aims and anticipate potential problems, are proposals for action rather than scripts to be followed slavishly, whether they are detailed documents or scribbled notes.

Pre-Planning

- Before we start to make a lesson plan, we need to consider a number of crucial factors such as the language level of our students, their educational and cultural background, their likely levels of motivation, and their different learning styles.
- Such knowledge is, of course, more easily available when we have spent time with a group than it is at the beginning of a course. When we are not yet familiar with the character of a group, we need to do our best to gain as much understanding of them as we can before starting to make decisions about what to teach.
- We also need a knowledge of the content and organization of the syllabus or curriculum we are working with, and the requirements of any exams which the students are working towards.
- **Armed now with our knowledge of the students and of the syllabus, we can go on to consider the four main planning elements :**

1- Activities :

When planning, it is vital to consider what students will be doing in the classroom; we have to consider the way they will be grouped, whether they are to move around the class, whether they will work quietly side-by-side researching on the internet or whether they will be involved in group-writing activities.

Our first planning thought should center round what kind of activity would be the best for a particular group of students at a particular point in a lesson, or on a particular day.

By deciding what kind of activity to offer them, we have a chance to balance the exercises in our lessons in order to offer the best possible chance of engaging and motivating the class. The best lessons offer a variety of activities within a class period.

2- Skills :

We need to make a decision about which language skills we wish our students to develop. This choice is sometimes determined by the syllabus or the coursebook. However, we still need to plan exactly how students are going to work with skill and what sub-skills we wish to practice.

3- Language :

We need to decide what language to introduce and have the students learn, practice, research, or use.

4- Content :

Lesson planners have to select content which has a good chance of provoking interest and involvement.

The Plan

- Having done pre-planning and made decisions about the kind of lesson we want to teach, we can make the lesson plan.

1- The planning continuum :

The way that teachers plan lessons depends upon the circumstances in which the lesson is to take place and on the teacher's experience.

2- Making a plan :

The following example of making a plan exemplifies how a teacher might proceed from pre-planning to a final plan.

a- Pre-planning background: for this lesson, some of the facts that feed into preplanning decisions are as follows:

- The class is at intermediate level. There are 31 students. They are between the ages of 18 and 31. They are enthusiastic. They participate well when not overtired.
- The students need 'waking up' at the beginning of a lesson.
- They are quite prepared to 'have a go' with creative activities.
- Lessons take place in a light classroom equipped with a whiteboard and an overhead projector.
- The topic involves forms of transport and different traveling environments.
- The next item on the grammar syllabus is the construction **should have + DONE**.
- The students have not had any reading skills work recently.
- The students need more oral fluency.

b- Pre-planning decisions :

As a result of the background information listed above, the teacher takes the following decisions:

- The lesson should include an oral fluency activity.
- The lesson should include the introduction of should have + DONE.
- It would be nice to have some reading in the lesson.

c- The Plan :

On the basis of our pre-planning decisions, we now can make our plan. The teacher has taken the decision to have the students read the text about a space station, and build activities around it. The probable sequence of the lesson will be:

- An oral fluency with 'changing groups'.
- Reading for prediction and then gist, in which students are asked to say what they expect to be in a text about a space station, before reading to check their prediction and then reading again for detailed understanding.
- New language introduction in which the teacher elicits 'should have' sentences and has students say them successfully.
- Language practice in which students talk about things they did or did not do, and which they should not or should have done.
- A space job interview in which students plan and role-play an interview for a job in a space station

The Formal Plan

- Formal plans are sometimes required, especially when, for example, teachers are to be observed and/or assessed as part of a training scheme or for reasons of internal quality control.

A formal plan should contain some or all of the following elements:

- 1- Class description and timetable.
- 2- Lesson aims (example..... to give students practice in reading both for gist and for detail).
- 3- Activities, procedures, and timing.
- 4- Problems and possibilities.

Notes: _____
