

## Guide to writing a successful Lesson Plan

[adapted from from <http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/index.htm>]

### To begin, ask yourself three basic questions:

- i. Where are your students going?
- ii. How are they going to get there?
- iii. How will you know when they've arrived?

Then begin to think about each of the following categories which form the organization of the plan. While planning, use the questions below to guide you during each stage.

### Goals and Objectives

Goals determine purpose, aim, and rationale for what you and your students will engage in during class time. Use this section to express the intermediate lesson goals that draw upon previous plans and activities and set the stage by preparing students for future activities and further knowledge acquisition. The goals are typically written as broad educational or unit goals adhering to State or National curriculum standards.

- What are the broader objectives, aims, or goals of the unit plan/curriculum?
- What are your goals for this unit?
- What do you expect students to be able to do by the end of this unit?
- What will students be able to do during each individual lesson?
- How will students demonstrate that they have learned and understood the objectives of the lesson?

### Prerequisites

Prerequisites can be useful when considering the readiness state of your students. Prerequisites allow you, and other teachers replicating your lesson plan, to factor in necessary prep activities to make sure that students can meet the lesson objectives.

- What must students already be able to do before this lesson?
- What concepts have to be mastered in advance to accomplish the lesson objectives?

### Materials

This section has two functions: it helps other teachers quickly determine a) how much preparation time, resources, and management will be involved in carrying out this plan and b) what materials, books, equipment, and resources they will need to have ready. A complete list of materials, including full citations of textbooks or story books used, worksheets, and any other special considerations are most useful.

- What materials will be needed?
- What textbooks or story books are needed? (please include full bibliographic citations)
- What needs to be prepared in advance?

### Lesson Procedures

A language lesson should include a variety of activities that combine different types of language input and output. Learners at all proficiency levels benefit from such variety; research has shown that it is more motivating and is more likely to result in effective language learning. An effective lesson has at least four parts:

1. Preparation
2. Presentation
3. Practice
4. Evaluation

These parts of a lesson may all take place in one class session or may extend over multiple sessions, depending on the nature of the topic and the activities.

The lesson plan should outline who will do what in each part of the lesson. The time allotted for preparation, presentation, and evaluation activities should be no more than 8-10 minutes each. Communication practice activities may run a little longer.

## 1. Preparation / Warm-Up

- As the class begins, give students a broad outline of the day's goals and activities so they know what to expect. Help them focus by eliciting their existing knowledge of the day's topics.
- Use discussion or homework review to elicit knowledge related to the grammar and language use points to be covered
- Use comparison with the native language to elicit strategies that students may already be using
- Use discussion of what students do and/or like to do to elicit their knowledge of the topic they will address in communication activities

## 2. Presentation/Modeling/Procedures for presenting activities

Move from preparation into presentation of the linguistic and topical content of the lesson and relevant learning strategies. Present the strategy first if it will help students absorb the lesson content.

Presentation provides the language input that gives students the foundation for their knowledge of the language. Input comes from the instructor and from course textbooks. Language textbooks designed for students in U.S. universities usually provide input only in the form of examples; explanations and instructions are written in English. To increase the amount of input that students receive in the target language, instructors should use it as much as possible for all classroom communication purposes.

An important part of the presentation is “structured output”, in which students practice the form that the instructor has presented. In structured output, accuracy of performance is important. Structured output is designed to make learners comfortable producing specific language items recently introduced.

Structured output is a type of communication that is found only in language classrooms. Because production is limited to preselected items, structured output is not truly communicative.

## 3. Practice

In this part of the lesson, the focus shifts from the instructor as presenter to the students as completers of a designated task. Students work in pairs or small groups on a topic-based task with a specific outcome. These tasks have to be well prepared and the instructor should model the task with a few selected students. In addition, it is advised that instructors provide the students with a time-frame for task completion. Completion of the task may require the bridging of an information gap. The instructor observes the groups and acts as a resource when students have questions that they cannot resolve themselves.

Language becomes a tool, rather than an end in itself. Learners have to use any or all of the language that they know along with varied communication strategies. The criterion of success is whether the learner gets the message across. Accuracy is not a consideration unless the lack of it interferes with the message.

Activities for the practice segment of the lesson may come from a textbook or be designed by the instructor.

Possible lesson formats: lecture, discussion, question-answer, group work (3-5 students, guided or independent), pair work (guided or independent), individual work (guided or independent) etc.

## 4. Evaluation

When all students have completed the communication practice task, reconvene the class as a group to recap the lesson. Ask students to give examples of how they used the linguistic content and learning or communication strategies to carry out the communication task. Evaluation is useful for four reasons:

- It reinforces the material that was presented earlier in the lesson
- It provides an opportunity for students to raise questions of usage and style
- It enables the instructor to monitor individual student comprehension and learning
- It provides closure to the lesson

## Helpful websites:

NCLRC – The Essentials of Language Teaching (<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/index.htm>)

Tips for writing objectives (<http://www.personal.psu.edu/staff/b/x/bxb11/Objectives/>)

## Other issues to be addressed while planning and evaluating the lesson plan

1. How long is the lesson expected to last?
  - a. Under what conditions or possible reasons would the timing of instruction need to be modified?
2. Are classroom rules, procedures and consequences already established in this class?
  - a. If so, list them here. If not, identify general rules, procedures and consequences that will be implemented. And, describe how the students will be taught/trained/informed of the rules, procedures and consequences.
3. How will instruction be modified during the lesson for special needs students?
4. How will technology be integrated in the lesson?
  - a. How will integration of technology be managed in this lesson (specifically, will there be different management needs for use of technology by the teacher or students?)
5. How will student comprehension of the learning objectives be verified?
6. What if students do not comprehend the learning objective(s)? What alternative instructional strategy can be implemented?
7. How will instructional effectiveness and/or if instruction is meeting the needs of ALL learners be verified?
8. How will students be called on to ensure optimum participation of ALL students?
9. How will student attention be gained to begin a different aspect of the lesson and/or if they get off-task?
  - a. What will be done if distractions occur?
  - b. What attention getting strategies can be implemented if needed?
10. How will students be praised or provided incentives (not just extrinsic rewards, must include how student motivation will intrinsically be addressed)?
  - a. What actions will students be praised for?
11. How will student misbehavior be corrected?
  - a. Minor violations? Moderate violations? Major violations?
12. Are there social skills that must be taught or modeled for ensuring effective group work (do not assume that they know these)?
  - a. If so, what are they and how will they be addressed?
13. How will students' comprehension of directions and their ability to follow those directions be ensured (do not say, "I will ask them if they understand"...you must come up with a proactive way to ensure student comprehension)?
14. How will students be moved from one aspect of the lesson to another, especially if at different points they operate in groups and individually?
15. How will materials be distributed?
  - a. When will they be distributed?
16. Where and how will students turn in their work?
17. What transitional activities will be implemented for this lesson?
18. What is planned for students who finish early?
19. What will be said if students ask why this content/concept is important to learn