

## **PLANNING A LESSON**

A key aspect of effective teaching is having a plan for what will happen in the classroom each day. Creating such a plan involves setting realistic goals, deciding how to incorporate required materials (course textbooks) and other materials, and developing activities that will promote learning.

An example lesson plan and lesson planning worksheet, attached at the end of this document, provide step-by-step guidance for lesson development. A supervisor observation worksheet allows supervisors to give specific feedback on a written lesson plan or an observed lesson.

Before working through this section, beginning instructors may want to check *Be Prepared: Survival Tips for New Teachers* in the What Teaching Is section.

### **Section Contents**

#### Set Lesson Goals

- Topic
- Linguistic content
- Communication tasks
- Learning strategies

#### Structure the Lesson

- Preparation
- Presentation
- Practice
- Evaluation
- Expansion

#### Identify Materials and Activities

Resources

Worksheets

Example lesson plan

Instructor lesson planning worksheet

Supervisor observation worksheet

## Set Lesson Goals

Lesson goals are most usefully stated in terms of what students will have done or accomplished at the end of the lesson. Stating goals in this way allows both teacher and learners to know when the goals have been reached.

To set lesson goals:

1. Identify a **topic** for the lesson. The topic is not a goal, but it will help you develop your goals. The topic may be determined largely by your curriculum and textbook, and may be part of a larger thematic unit such as Travel or Leisure Activities. If you have some flexibility in choice of topic, consider your students' interests and the availability of authentic materials at the appropriate level.
2. Identify specific **linguistic content**, such as vocabulary and points of grammar or language use, to be introduced or reviewed. These are usually prescribed by the course textbook or course curriculum. If they are not, select points that are connected in some significant way with the topic of the lesson.
3. Identify specific **communication tasks** to be completed by students. To be authentic, the tasks should allow, but not require, students to use the vocabulary, grammar, and strategies presented in the lesson. The focus of the tasks should be topical, not grammatical. This means that it may be possible for some students to complete the task without using either the grammar point or the strategy presented in the first part of the lesson.
4. Identify specific **learning strategies** to be introduced or reviewed in connection with the lesson. See *Motivating Learners* for more on learning strategies.
5. Create goal statements for the linguistic content, communication tasks, and learning strategies that state what you will do and what students will do during the lesson.

## Structure the Lesson

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 five parts:

Preparation  
Presentation/Modeling  
Practice  
Evaluation  
Expansion

The five 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**

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**

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. (See Teaching Goals and Methods for more on input.)

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