

Effectiveness of lesson planning in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

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Abstract: A lesson plan is a set of notes that helps us to think through what we are going to teach and how we are going to teach and to take into consideration many elements such as, students' learning styles, previous knowledge, types of intelligences, interests and other related issues. It guides us during and after the lesson that which things should be added or removed for the next session. Planning is often considered as a key aspect of teaching. During the planning phase, the teacher makes decisions about goals, activities, resources, timing, grouping and other aspects of the lesson. In language classes teachers do not have lesson plans as they do not understand the effectiveness of a lesson plan. This research paper reviews different articles to find the effectiveness of having a lesson plan in language classes. It also discusses the plus and negative aspects of having a lesson plan in language classes.

Key Words: principles of Lesson Planning, Development of Lesson Plans in EFL.

1. INTRODCUTION:

Lesson planning has always been an essential competence for teachers around the world especially for teachers of second language learners. It also guides us during and after the lesson regarding which things should be added or removed for the next session. This paper shows how planning affects the quality of teaching and learning in EFL classes. Planning and implementing those plans are complex and intellectually demanding for English Language Teacher trainees preparing for their professional life. Many find it difficult to develop a lesson holistically and to maintain alignment across aims, practical steps, and evaluation when planning and implementing a lesson. We attempted to address this problem by establishing a model of trainees' action that included their deliberate metacognitive structuring of a lesson both in planning and review phases (Pang, 2016).

The increasing number of second language learners in classrooms all around the world has required teachers to adapt their teaching methods and materials to the various learners' needs. Second language learners in particular need specific teaching strategies, which not only aim at helping them understand the linguistic structure of the language of instruction, but also enable them to remember and comprehend the many different words in this "foreign" language. For second language learners, developing reading skills and improving language abilities need to go hand in hand independent of the language (Shrum 2, & Glisan, 2005).

Foreign language teaching and learning is an issue of high relevance in the world nowadays. According to Gutierrez, (2015) "Unfortunately, language teaching has often been reduced to the mastery of language structures, disregarding the vast number of possibilities that language teaching provides to involve students in the discussion and analysis of issues that affect their everyday life." Shifting language teaching toward this goal, however, has to start in language teachers' preparation programs especially in planning for EFL students. The articles reviewed mostly discuss that second language teacher are the main core of language teaching, they are the ones who create situations for better learning and pave the way for learners to acquire a second language effectively. The effectiveness was measured through practicum classes' results and experimental studies, which showed that preparation, and planning lessons affects learning second language and students' performance during the learning process.

2. Objectives of the research and questions:

The purpose of this research is to identify the effectiveness of lesson planning in teaching EFL classes. The research questions for my study are:

- Does lesson planning help both students and teachers in learning a second language effectively?
- Does lesson planning help teachers to identify the weaknesses and positive aspects of teaching in EFL classes?

3. Method of the research:

The research design of this study was descriptive (systematic review). I searched for the key words (Lesson Plan principles, Lesson Plan Role in EFL, Developing & Designing Lesson plan for EFL) which relate to my research topic

through online scientific sources (ERIC, Hinari ADRI) Then I refined my search through the date of articles and peer reviewed articles. Among 75 articles (10 articles from ERIC) (65 articles from Hinari and ARDI) were reviewed. After reviewing all the articles’ abstracts, I chose the ones which related to the EFL context and showed the impact of planning in learning and teaching process. Then I summarized them and used the information in my research. Finally, I selected twenty of them all of which explained the impact of lesson planning in learning and teaching process for EFL students. The articles had been published between (2005- 2018) years. (Figure 1)

Lesson Plan principles, Lesson Plan Role in EFL, Developing & Designing Lesson plan for EFL

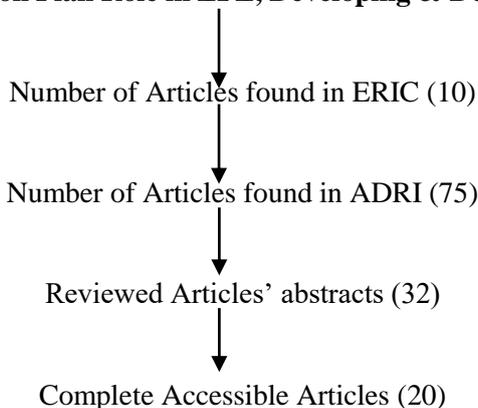


Figure (1) shows the way of searching and selecting articles for this study.

3. Review of Literature and Results:

Researchers state their view points on the impact of lesson planning in learning process for EFL in different ways. They mostly point out the important elements of a good lesson plan which are (goals, different type of activities, learning style, intelligence level, assessment and time management). According to methodologists and psychologists it is necessary to develop the ability to communicate in a foreign language, or, to facilitate the acquisition of a foreign language communicative competence which should be considered during planning of lessons (Gutierrez, 2015).

Some researchers (Heidari, Azizifar, Gowhary, & Abbasi, 2015) found through statistical analysis that, female teachers were more interested in the use of LP than male teachers.

According to Lika, (2017) a lesson plan is a set of notes that helps us to think through what we are going to teach, how we are going to teach and taking into consideration many elements such as, students’ learning styles, previous knowledge, types of intelligences, interests and other related issues. She states that these issues directly influence the learning process therefore; planning a lesson will decrease the level of problems (Lika, 2017).

Many instructors find it difficult to develop a lesson holistically and to maintain alignment across aims, practical steps, and evaluation when planning and implementing a lesson but practicing; sharing plans and planning regularly will help instructors to overcome these challenges (Pang, 2016).

Second language learners need specific learning strategies, which not only aim at helping them understand the linguistic structure of the language of instruction, but also enable students to remember, to communicate and comprehend many different words in the "foreign" language; this depends on the instructor’s decisions during the planning phase. For second language learners (L2), developing reading skills and improving language abilities need to go hand in hand independently of the language phase (Gutierrez, 2015).

Gutierrez, stated that the problem of formation of foreign language competence in the process of teaching students can be considered in two ways “technological and optimization.” The technological aspect is aimed at identifying the tools of teaching, that is, the planning (the methods and technologies needed to achieve the best results in the acquisition of knowledge), skills and abilities by students. The optimization aspect is aimed at more efficient and consistent application of existing technologies, depending on the specific features of the educational process and planning phase.

According to Khoshshima and Khosravani (2014) “Teaching and learning are interrelated”. They stated that a successful examination outcome requires good materials; good teaching techniques and effective learning on the part of students; but people have different learning preferences.

Khoshshima, H., and Khosravani, M. (2014) mention that lesson plans serves variety of purposes. They specify five purposes that should be considered in lesson planning: One important purpose is to help you (teachers) develop your (teachers) abilities to select, structure, and organize lesson content into effective support of learning. The process

of planning each lesson forces you to reflect on what you want to accomplish in each class and how best to do so.1. Planning helps you control how class time is used and it provides a framework for your lesson.2. It helps you to think through and reconsider the teaching process.3. It provides sense of security. 4. It determines the sequence and timing of activities.5. It provides you with the record of what has been taught.

Even if you are teaching from a textbook (which contains lessons that have already been planned) further planning is usually necessary to adapt the textbook to the teaching context and to supplement it based on learner’s background, interest, learning style, and abilities. Teachers should choose the tasks and activities that address the language skills that the lesson addresses. The plan may also include ideas on how teachers will monitor their students’ learning and understanding.

Richards (2005) suggests that lesson plans are systematic records of a teachers’ thoughts about what will be covered during a lesson and help teachers to think about the lesson in advance to resolve problems, to provide structure for a lesson, (Richards, 2005. p.103).

(McCutcheon, 2006) stated that Teachers plan for “internal reasons” in order to feel more confident, to learn the subject matter better, to enable lessons to run more smoothly, and to anticipate problems before they happen. The “external reason” for planning a lesson is to satisfy the expectation of the school Principle or supervisor. Lesson planning is especially important for pre-service teachers, because they need to be more in control before they begin the lesson.

Table (1) shows the research result of studies that the findings of which showed similar effects of lesson planning in EFL classes.

Researchers	The effectiveness of lesson planning in teaching EFL classes
Azkiyah, & Mukminin, (2017)	LP is the way for the below stated elements in learning process “teaching quality is conceptualized based on eight classroom factors (orientation, structuring, modeling, application, questioning, building classroom as a learning environment, assessment, and time management) of the dynamic model,” which have affect student learning outcomes.
Harmer (2005)	LP Helps teachers in decision making about goals, activities, resources, timing, grouping and other aspects of lesson.
Lika, (2017).	LP Help teachers to consider many elements such as, students’ learning styles, previous knowledge, types of intelligences, interests and other related issues.
(Gutierrez, 2015).	LP Helps teachers to choose specific learning strategies, which not only aim at helping them understand the linguistic structure of the language, but also need to enable students to remember and comprehend many different words in the "foreign" language to communicate.
Pang, (2016)	LP Helps teachers to develop the ability to communicate in a foreign language, or to facilitate the acquisition of a foreign language communicative competence which can be done during planning phase.
Gutierrez, (2015)	LP Helps teachers in problem formation of foreign language competence in the teaching process which can be considered in two aspects “technological and optimization” that has an important role in planning lessons.
Khoshsima,& Khosravani, (2014)	“Teaching and learning are interrelated.” LP Helps teachers to choose effective materials, good teaching techniques and effective learning on the part of students participation.
Wu,Yen, & Marek, (2011)	LP Helps teachers in many ways, They mentioned that lesson plan serves variety of purposes.1.develop your abilities to select, structure, and organize lesson content into effective support of learning.2. Helps control how class time is used and it provides a framework for your lesson. 3. Helps to think and reconsider the teaching process.4. It provides sense of security and reminds you the record of what has been taught. 5. Determines the sequence and timing of activities.
Shrum L.& Glisan, (2005)	LP helps teachers to make further planning to adapt the textbook to the teaching context and to supplement it based on learner’s background, interest, learning style, and abilities. Even if you are teaching from a textbook (which contains lessons that have already been planned)
Richards(2005)	LP helps pre-service teachers because they need to be more in control before they begin the lesson. It gives a sense of confidence to new teachers.

McCutcheon,(1980)	LP helps teachers to feel more confident, to learn the subject matter better, to enable lessons to run more smoothly, and to anticipate problems before they happen.
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4. DISCUSSION:

As I studied the researchers' ideas about lesson planning (LP), there were similarities among them. They mostly point out the important elements of a good lesson plan which are (goals, different types of activities, learning styles, intelligence level, assessment and time management). Most of them emphasized goal, different types of activities and intelligence types, while least of the researcher highlighted other issues such as (orientation, structuring, modeling, application, questioning, building classroom as a learning environment, assessment, and time management) of the dynamic model, which affects students' learning outcomes.

According to Pang (2016), a foreign language as the means of communication and knowledge of the world has a special place in the system of modern education because of its social, cognitive and developmental functions. Gutierrez (2015) also emphasized on language competence which is communication that must be considered during planning in activities. They mostly emphasize on communicative competence in a second language which both stated that Communicative competence is the main practical purpose of teaching a foreign language. It deals with the methods of improving their learning skills and abilities. The articles mention teaching approaches to matching and interaction of learning styles in different cultures which should be consider during planning lesson.

Researchers as Harmer (2005), Lika, (2017), Azkiyah, and Mukminin, (2017) stated their view points on learning styles, type of intelligence that will be done in the planning phase before the teaching process. They emphasized on grouping which mixes different learning styles, as different activities also aim is to cover different types of intelligence in a lesson.

Language teaching has often been reduced to the mastery of language structures, disregarding the vast number of possibilities that language teaching provides to involve students in the discussion and analysis of issues that affect their everyday life. Shifting language teaching toward this goal, however, has to start in the language teachers' preparation. (Lara Herrera, 2015).

Richards (2005), declared something different about. He stated that LP helps pre-service teachers to be full prepared before teaching and be more experienced in applying it in the real context of teaching. McCutcheon, (1980) mentioned that LP helps teachers to feel more confident, to learn the subject matter better, to enable lessons to run more smoothly, and to anticipate problems before they happen. Therefore, lesson planning paves all the ways for instructors as well as students to be successful in learning process.

5. CONCLUSION:

To sum up, many researchers stated their view points on lesson planning and its positive effect on teaching EFL classes. Most researchers revealed that second language teachers are the core of language teaching; they are the ones who create situations for better learning and pave the way for learners to acquire a second language effectively and consistently (Clasquin-Johnson, 2016). It should also be noted that, regardless of how students are grouped, teachers should deliberately incorporate different learning styles into the daily lesson plan. Teachers should not forget that they are the main element responsible for the organization, effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the educational process. Therefore, English Department of Kabul University teachers and school language teachers have to insist that planning a lesson is a compulsory task of each teacher.

6. SUGGESTION:

Some of challenges that always teachers experience during teaching EFL classes is directly related to pedagogical skills that they should be better prepared in the future. This paper recommends that more seminars workshops and in-service courses be organized for all teachers to help, train and boost their attitudes on the significance of lesson plans in teaching/learning of L2 in order to enhance their ability to be full prepared before entering the class.

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