

Lesson Planning

Adult English language learners generally have limited time to devote to participating in language classes. A good lesson plan is an important tool that focuses both the instructor and the learners on the purpose of the lesson and, if carefully constructed and followed, enables learners to efficiently meet their goals.

A lesson is a unified set of activities that focuses on one teaching objective at a time. A teaching objective states what the learners will be able to do at the end of the lesson. Teachers use the information learned through the needs assessment to develop the objectives (See *Needs Assessment and Learner Self-Evaluation Activity Packet*, page II–5.) For example, if the learners identify “understand written communication from my children’s teachers” as a goal, an objective might be “learners will be able to interpret a child’s weekly homework form” or “learners will be able to read the notes that their children’s teachers send from school.”

What Are the Essential Components of a Lesson Plan?

A lesson plan identifies the enabling objectives necessary to meet the lesson objective, the materials and equipment needed, and the activities appropriate to accomplish the objective.

- *Enabling objectives* are the basic skills (language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) and the life skills (including cultural information) that are necessary to accomplish the objective.
- *Materials and equipment* should be identified and secured well before class time to ensure that activities can be carried out as planned. These may include realia (real-life materials like bus schedules and children’s report cards), visual aids, teacher-made handouts, textbooks, flip chart and markers, overhead projector, tape recorder, etc.
- *Activities* generally move from more controlled (e.g., repetition) to a less structured or free format (e.g., interviewing each other). They should be varied in type (e.g., whole group, paired, individual) and modality (e.g., speaking, listening, writing).

a. What Are the Stages of a Lesson?

Good lesson design begins with a review of previously learned material. New material is then introduced, followed by opportunities for learners to practice and be evaluated on what they are learning. In general, a lesson is composed of the following stages:

- Warm-up/Review—encourages learners to use what they have been taught in previous lessons
- Introduction to a new lesson—focuses the learners’ attention on the objective of the new lesson and relates the objective to their lives

- Presentation—introduces new information, checks learner comprehension of the new material, and models the tasks that the learners will do in the practice stage
- Practice—provides opportunities to practice and apply the new language or information
- Evaluation—enables the instructor and learners to assess how well they have grasped the lesson

What Are Some Practical Considerations in Planning Lessons?

A good lesson plan involves consideration of more than just what is going to be taught (the objective) and how it will be taught (materials, equipment, and activities). The following elements also need to be thought about and planned for:

- Sequencing—Do the activities move logically so learners are progressively building on what they already know? Do the activities flow well? Are transitions between activities smooth?
- Pacing—Are activities the right length and varied so that learners remain engaged and enthused?
- Gauging difficulty—Do the learners have enough skill and knowledge to do the planned activities? Are the instructions clear?
- Accounting for individual differences—Do the activities allow for learners of varying proficiency levels to receive extra attention they might need, whether below or above the norm? Are all students actively involved?
- Monitoring learner versus teacher talk—What is the balance between learner talk and teacher talk? Does the lesson allow a time for learners to interact, producing and initiating language?
- Timing—Was the amount of time allotted for each part of the lesson sufficient? If the planned lesson finishes early, is there a backup activity ready? If the lesson wasn't completed as planned, how can the next class be adjusted to finish the material?

Most of these aspects of lesson planning are learned by experience, so it is important for the instructor to evaluate how the lesson went at the end of each class period. Ask the following questions:

- What went well? Why?
- What did not go as planned? Why?

- If I had it to do over again, what would I change?
- What have I learned about my students that I can account for in future lesson planning?

A lesson plan acts as a road map for a class session. It identifies the destination (objective of the lesson) and marks out the route (activities for each stage of the lesson). It is an aid for both new and seasoned teachers. New teachers should write down the details of each activity—perhaps even script them. Experience will guide how detailed a lesson plan needs to be. Sharing the plan with learners (e.g., writing the objective and a brief description of activities on the board) keeps both the teacher and the learner focused on where they are going, how they are going to get there, and when they arrive.

Sample Lesson Plans

The lesson plans that follow are broken down into three categories.

1. Lesson Plan Format
2. Beginning Level Lesson Plan
3. Intermediate Level Lesson Plan

References

- Arlington Education and Employment Program. (1994). *The REEP adult ESL curriculum* (3rd ed.). Available from <http://www.apsva.us/reep>
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Longman.
- McMullin, M. (1992). *ESL techniques: Lesson planning. Teacher training through video*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Schaffer, D., & Van Duzer, C. (1984). *Competency-based teacher education workshops in CBE/ESL*. Arlington, VA: Arlington County Public Schools.

Sample II-14: Lesson Plan Format

Class _____

Date _____

Time:

Lesson Objective:

Language Skills:

Life Skills:

Materials:

Equipment:

Stages of the Lesson

Warm Up/Review

Introduction

Presentation

Practice

Evaluation

Sample II-15: Lesson Plan: Beginning Level

Class Beginning Date _____

Time: We are assuming the class period is a minimum of two hours. Times listed for the activities are approximate. Times for each of the activities will vary depending on number of students in the class, literacy level of the class, and other factors. A specific lesson plan will always occur in the context of prior and subsequent lessons and objectives and other class activities.

Lesson Objective: Telephone the school office to report a child's absence. (In a telephone conversation role play, students will be evaluated on the following content: giving the name of the child, the child's teacher or class, and the reason for the absence.)

Language Skills

Possessive pronouns

Vocabulary: illnesses; sick, absent, appointment; holidays

Life Skills:

Cultural information: Schools expect to be informed about a child's absence.

Reasons for absence include sickness, doctor or dentist appointment, religious holiday, family emergency (e.g., death in family)

Materials:

- Practice dialogues (handouts, transparency)
- Butcher paper for teacher to draw stick figures of mother on phone and child with thermometer in mouth
- Evaluation Checklist
- Listening grid

Equipment:

- Overhead projector (OHP)
- Practice telephones

Stages of the Lesson:

Warm Up/Review (10 minutes)

From previous lessons, review health problems that children frequently have (e.g., stomachache, sore throat, fever).

Introduction

“Today we are going to talk about calling the school office when your child is sick and not going to school.”

Presentation (30 minutes)

1. Show the students the teacher-created stick drawing of mother and child. Ask the learners what is happening.
2. Read dialogue 1 (page II-35) to the students. Ask if they were right about what is happening.
3. Read the dialogue again and ask the following comprehension questions:

Who is Mrs. Sanchez calling?	Who is sick? What is the matter with her?
Why is she calling the school?	Who is Mrs. Johnson?

4. Have the class practice the dialogue several times, repeating each sentence after you. Then divide the class in half and have one half repeat part A and the other half part B. Switch parts.
5. Show the dialogue in writing (Transparency of Dialogue 1). Have the students read the dialogue. Ask if there are any words they do not know. If so, discuss the meanings.
6. Hand out Dialogue 1 to each student. Have the students work in pairs and practice reading the dialogue.
7. Brainstorm with the whole class other reasons for being absent. Write the reasons on the board. Discuss which are acceptable and which might not be. Have the students practice the dialogue, substituting the reasons for absence.
8. Point out the possessive pronouns “my” and “her.” Discuss their meaning and give several other examples (e.g., hold up your book and say, “This is my book.” Introduce (or review) my, your, his, her, our, their.
9. Hand out Dialogue 2 (page II-33) to each student and put the transparency of Dialogue 2 on the OHP. Ask the students to circle the possessive pronouns on their copies. Then ask a student to come up and circle them on the transparency. Have the students check their papers. Discuss why the “her” changed to “his.”
10. Have the students work in pairs to read the dialogue.

Practice (15 minutes)

1. As a whole class, brainstorm a list of names of the parents’ children’s schools and teachers.
2. In pairs, have the students practice the dialogues, substituting their own information (i.e., school name, child name, teacher name).

Evaluation (30 minutes)

1. In pairs, have the students create their own dialogues patterned after Dialogues 1 and 2, selecting information from the brainstormed lists on the board.
2. Have each pair come to the front of the room and use the practice telephones to demonstrate their dialogues. Use the Evaluation Checklist (page II-36) to note inclusion of the following information: name of child, name of child’s teacher, and reason for the absence.
3. Have the students in the audience listen for the reason for the absence and write it down on the listening grid provided (page II-36). (Note: This is preparation for taking a phone message; it also keeps the listeners focused.)

Teacher Instructions: See *Sample II–15* Lesson Plan: Beginning Level, pages II–31–32, for instructions on how to use these dialogues.

Sample II–16: Student Activity Sheets/Transparencies

Dialogue 1

Telephoning the School Office

- A. Good morning. Grover Elementary School.
B. Hello. This is Mrs. Sanchez.
A. How can I help you?
B. My daughter won't be in school today. She has a fever.
A. What's her name?
B. Maria Escobar.
A. Who is her teacher?
B. Mrs. Johnson.
A. Thank you for calling. I hope she feels better tomorrow.
B. Thank you. Goodbye.
A. Bye.

Dialogue 2

Telephoning the School Office

- A. Good morning. Grover Elementary School.
B. Hello. This is Mrs. Sanchez.
A. How can I help you?
B. My son won't be in school today. He has a fever.
A. What's his name?
B. Jose Escobar.
A. Who is his teacher?
B. Mrs. Johnson.
A. Thank you for calling. I hope he feels better tomorrow.
B. Thank you. Goodbye.
A. Bye.

Sample II-17: Evaluation Checklist

Teacher Instructions: Use this checklist to evaluate students' practice telephone conversations as described in the preceding Sample Lesson Plan, pages II-33-34.

Student's Name	Child's Name	Teacher/Class	Reason

Sample II-18: Listening Grid

Instructions: Have the students listen for the reason for the absences and write it down in the grid below as described in the preceding Sample Lesson Plan, pages II-33-34.

Parent Name	Reason For Absence
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Sample II-19: Lesson Plan: Intermediate Level

Class Intermediate ESL Date _____

Time: We are assuming the class period is a minimum of two hours. Times listed for the activities are approximate. Times for each of the activities will vary depending on number of students in the class, literacy level of the class, and other factors. A specific lesson plan will always occur in the context of prior and subsequent lessons and objectives and other class activities. The following is a sample plan using a commercially published textbook. It is included because it contains an activity for interpreting a weekly homework form, a type of document literacy that most parents will need to read and fill out for their children. Also, we want to show that it is not necessary to create all your own activities in your lesson plans; textbook exercises can often be adapted or even used as is to meet your objectives.

Lesson Objective: Interpret elementary school weekly homework form.

Language Skills:

Read a simple chart and explain the following orally:

- Days of the week
- School subjects
- Other vocabulary: daily, weekly, each, comments (new)

Life Skills:

Cultural information: parents are often expected to monitor or help with children's homework

Materials:

- Sample homework forms from local schools
- Transparency of one form
- *A Day in the Life of the Gonzalez Family* (text, page 49 and video scene 6), by C. Van Duzer & M. Burt (1999). Available from the Center for Applied Linguistics, at <http://calstore.cal.org/store/>
Used with permission.

Equipment:

- Overhead projector
- VCR

Stages of the Lesson:

Warm Up/Review (10 minutes)

Review school subjects by asking learners what their children are studying in school and which subjects and skills are listed on their children's report cards (This is a review of a previous lesson on interpreting report cards).

Review days of the week by asking learners if their children study these every day or only on certain days.

Ask what days the learners study English and what they do other days.

Introduction

“Elementary school teachers often prepare weekly homework forms so parents can help their children with homework. Today we are going to learn how to read and fill out these forms.”

Presentation (20 minutes)

1. Play the video, scene 6 (Class has previously seen this during a lesson on permission slips and report cards). Ask the learners what Maria can do to help her daughter do better in school. Elicit the suggestion that she can review the weekly homework sheet.
2. Show the Sample Homework Form A (page II–39) on the Overhead Projector. Have the learners read the form silently and note any words they don’t know. Ask what words they noted and write them on the board. Have the learners discuss the meanings. Hand out copies of the form to the students. Then ask the following comprehension questions:
 - What do the children have to do every day?
 - How often do they have a math worksheet?
 - How often do they create a special project?
 - What is Catalina having difficulty doing?
 - What does her mother ask the teacher to do?

Practice (30 minutes)

1. Have the learners open their books to page 49 of the textbook. Have them read the form silently and then work in pairs to answer the discussion questions on the page.
2. Hand out Sample Homework Form B to each pair (page II–40). Have them write questions about this form. Have them exchange papers with another pair and answer the questions that the pairs have written. Discuss as a whole group.
3. As a whole group, have the learners list the homework assignments that their children usually have and write them on the board.
4. In pairs, have the learners create a homework form for their children.

Evaluation (30 minutes)

1. Ask the learners to bring their children’s weekly homework forms to the next class and to prepare a short oral presentation that gives information about what their child needs to do for homework that week, how often, and any help needed from family members.
2. During the presentations, evaluate each learner on the inclusion and accuracy of the information stated above.

Sample II–20: Homework Form A

(See the sample lesson plan on page II–37-38 for general instructions.)

Directions: Read the form and answer the questions below about it.

Carter Elementary School Weekly Homework Plan – Fifth Grade		Child's Name <u>Catalina Gomez</u> Teacher <u>Mr. Peepers</u>			
Students will:	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
• read 20 minutes each night.	X	X	X	X	X
• complete a math sheet (M-W-F).	X		X		X
• complete a spelling activity (Monday-Thursday) and study for a quiz on Thursday night.	X	X	X	X	
• prepare a Science or History project once a month. Instructions will come home 2 weeks before the Friday it is due.	X	X	X	X	
Parents: Please help your child every day. After finishing the homework each night, check the appropriate boxes. Return the folder each Friday. You can write any comments you have below.					
Parent Comments <u>Cati had trouble with the math on Wednesday. Can you explain how to subtract fractions again? Thank you.</u>					
Parent Signature <u>Eliana Flores Gomez</u> Date: Friday <u>9/17/04</u>					

- What do the children have to do every day?
- How often do they have a math worksheet?
- How often do they create a special project?
- What is Catalina having difficulty doing?
- What does her mother ask the teacher to do?

Sample II-21: Homework Form B

(See the sample lesson plan on page II-37-38 for general instructions)

Directions: With a partner, write questions about this form. Then exchange papers with another pair and answer the questions that the pairs have written. Discuss as a whole group.

Carter Elementary School	Child's Name _____				
Weekly Homework Plan –Third Grade	Teacher _____				
Students will:	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
• read 20-30 minutes each night.					
• complete a math sheet (M-T-W-Th).					
• complete a nightly spelling activity and study for a quiz on Thursday night.					
• prepare a Book project once a month. Instructions will come home 2 weeks before the Friday it is due.					
Parent Comments _____					

Parent Signature _____ Date: Friday _____					