SELECTION OF A LESSON PLAN FORMAT IN A CLASS PLANNING MODULE *

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1. INTRODUCTION

A very useful tool for ESL/EFL teacher training programs, as well as language teaching situations, has been the lesson plan. It varies in form depending on the needs, methodology, and goals of the particular language institute, university or teacher training program. Very often it is an accepted format designed for teachers to use when planning teaching sessions and use when they are being observed by supervisors.

When deciding on a format to use, designing one considering the parameters of a language institute, or revamping a currently existing one, a look at the results of a class planning module and a perusal of some currently existing formats will prove beneficial. (A bibliography of existing articles available at the National Autonomous University follows this article.)

2. TEACHER TRAINING CLASS PLANNING MODULE

At the Centro de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras, UNAM, a teacher training program has been in progress since 1980. One of the modules of the first semester, class planning, concentrates on the development of a lesson plan format useful for observations this semester and practice teaching the second semester. The aim of the module, then,

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is for the trainees to reach a conclusion about their format, evaluate it through observations, and finalize it as their format for their practice teaching. Four language groups (French, Portuguese, German, and English) comprise the teacher training class. In each language area the same procedure was followed to arrive at the format accepted by the group with possible later modifications. The four plans were either "horizontal", "vertical", or a mixture of the two.

3. ARTICLES ON LESSON PLANS

Two formats were found in existing articles on lesson plans. If we call Marianne Celce-Murcia's layout in Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (1979, 295-310) a "vertical" plan since her cover sheet and the lesson and its activities are listed one after another (See Appendix A-1), then A. Furlan's "carta descriptiva" (1979, 143-150) accomplishes the same, but horizontally. His columns begin with general and specific objectives, include content, student activities, resources, evaluation, bibliography, and time; and conclude with observations. The general data about the class (i.e., academic program, student level, materials etc.,) appear above the columns.

These two formats were not shown to the trainees until after they considered their own needs when observing classes at CELE.

4. THE TASK OF ARRIVING AT A FORMAT

Considering the aim of this module and the need to decide upon a format as soon as possible, each language group was handled separately although the same procedure was used with each. Five steps were involved:

4.1 Assignment (for the trainees given one week in advance):

Make a list of the elements that enter into the elaboration of a class plan (that is, the structuring of it) or are present when observing a teaching session. E.G., objectives, activities evaluation. Consider the constraints of van Ek (1976, 149, 150) and how such restrictions in course design influence the design of a lesson plan. (van Ek's constraints include age range, motivation, washback, student background, teacher background, opportunity, materials, time (duration) (frequency), physical and day-to-day details).

4.2 "Brain Storming": With the use of an Overhead Projector: sort, eliminate, decide upon those elements which are essential and organize them into a format which can be copied by anyone.

4.3 Testing: observe with the group's lesson plan format a class and collect information about the lesson;

4.4 Discussion and evaluation: Using the lesson plan, discuss its merits, revise or modify.

4.5 Arrive at a final form (one which will be used for observations during the semester and w/ slight modifications in practice teaching.)

5. "VERTICAL" AND "HORIZONTAL" FORMATS BY LANGUAGE GROUPS

5.1 French group (vertical)

Those in the French group decided upon one basic plan but only after modifications. One of their changes was with materials; the type of text was important to their approach -- authentic or pedagogical text. They also decided upon

having procedure divided up by time, task, and explanations. Evaluation was to be noted at the end of the write-up. (Refer to Appendix B-1).

5.2 English Group (combination)

After the experience of the first generation of students in the teacher training program and their need for more emphasis in how evaluation occurs and when, this year's trainees planned a format which included Objectives (Global and Specific), Materials, Activities, Procedure, etc. However, they supplied a column (evaluation) which ran parallel to the steps of the procedure but used a code to show how the teacher was evaluating and at what point in the lesson. (See the code *, △, □ and ○ in Appendix B-2).

5.3 German Group (horizontal)

This group was the first to accept a horizontal layout and find it more efficient for their purposes. The same categories as those of Remedi were included with an emphasis on student activity, techniques and observations. The latter was one area noted only by this language group (See Appendix B-3).

5.4 Portuguese Group (horizontal)

An aspect the Portuguese specified in their format was a simplified form with four divisions: Objectives, Activities, Procedure and Time. Although the format does not include specific materials or techniques these would conceivably be commented upon in activities. This straight forward approach is unique in that it divides up activities into two areas; student and teacher, and considers each separately. (Appendix B-4).

6. SELECTION

The experience I had with each language group illustrated the variability one would find among language areas within one university. This variability has to be recognized when a teacher training program or language institute decides to standardize their format. What are the needs of the students and the institution and how are they reflected in the language teaching? What approach or focus is being observed? What are the demands of the syllabus?

For a format to reflect accurately a teaching situation, it needs to:

- be specific enough to elicit the pertinent details
- be concise and easily handled
- be an aid for the teacher not a burden
- be a means of self-evaluation for future teaching experiences
- include major areas of importance to the teacher

This article has sought, therefore, to include bibliographic references related to class planning in general, point out two related formats "horizontal" and "vertical", show how 4 language groups independent of these formats arrived at their own and point out several considerations which can cause the format to vary. It is hoped that the experience of this teacher training program will prove beneficial to those designing a format or revising one.

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COVER SHEET 1.

The following set of lesson plans should all be evaluated in terms of the following information:

Student Teacher _____
Regular Teacher _____
Supervising/Coordinating Teacher _____
School _____
Class _____
Learning Stage of Class _____
Age Level of Class _____
Size of Class _____
Linguistic/Ethnic Composition of Class _____
Other Relevant Factors _____
(e.g., syllabus, class texts, examination system, degree of student motivation, reason(s) for studying English, literacy level, etc.)

Note: A cover sheet of this kind is suggested to help the student teacher avoid needless repetition of information on the actual lesson plan. Ordinarily, such information would be provided with each lesson plan.

LESSON PLAN 2.

Student teacher's name _____
Date of presentation _____
Estimated Time of Lesson _____
Teaching Point _____

Pre-assessment Activity _____
Relationship to Current Unit _____
Pre-entry Performance _____
Performance Objectives _____
Criterion Level: _____

Materials: _____

PROCEDURES (Student Activities)[3].

Step 1 - Introduction
(time:)

Step n. (Concluding activity that permits informal testing of criterion level established above.)
(time:)

Assignment (optional):
Contingency plans:
Comments/Self-evaluation: (Fill out after lesson is taught.)

APPENDIX A-2: Furlan (et al) "Carta Descriptiva"

Observations:

UNIT OBJECTIVE	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	CONTENT	STUDENT ACTIVITY	TECHNIQUES	RESOURCES/ MATERIALS	EVALUATION	TIME

APPENDIX B-1 FRENCH

DATOS: No. of students:
Level:

GLOBAL OBJECTIVE: _____

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: _____ ACTIVITY: _____

_____ _____

MATERIAL: AUTHENTIC TEXT _____

PEDAGOGICAL TEXT _____

EQUIPMENT: PROJECTOR, TAPE RECORDER, ETC. _____

ACTIVITY: TYPE _____ speaking _____ listening

_____ reading _____ speaking

PROCEDURES:

TIME _____

TASK _____

EXPLANATIONS _____

EVALUATION: HOW _____

WHEN (at what time) _____

LEVEL _____ OBSERVER _____ DATE _____ HOUR _____

No. of Students _____

SYNTHESIS OF PREVIOUS CLASS _____

_____

GLOBAL OBJECTIVE _____

Specific Objective	Eval. Code	Materials	Activity	Procedure	Time

Evaluation Code

* Teacher Monitoring △ Self Monitoring □ Formal Test situation ○ Peer Monitoring ⌐ Free

APPENDIX B-3: GERMAN

UNIT OBJECTIVE	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	CONTENT	STUDENT ACTIVITY	TECHNIQUES	RESOURCES/ MATERIALS	EVALUATION	TIME	OBSERVATIONS

APPENDIX B-4: PORTUGUESE

OBJECTIVES		ACTIVITY		PROCEDURE	TIME
UNIT	SPECIFIC CLASS OBJECTIVES	TEACHER	STUDENT	a) b) c) d)	a) b) c) d)