

Lesson planning and classroom management: Two sides of the same coin



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THANKS



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Outline of the talk

- 1) What is a lesson plan/What is classroom management?
- 2) How does classroom management interact with lesson planning?
- 3) What does a good lesson plan look like?
An empirical example
- 4) An empirical example of classroom management:
Giving oral instructions
- 5) Conclusions

What is a lesson plan?

A lesson plan is a written statement of what **you, the teacher, think will happen in a class that you are going to teach in the near future**

What is classroom management?

Classroom management is the art of interpreting your lesson plan in real time in such a way that your lesson flows smoothly and naturally

How does classroom management interact with lesson planning?

In the technical applied linguistics literature, this distinction between our written intentions and what we actually do in the classroom is often referred to as the difference between a task-as work-plan and a task-as-activity



See:

Coughlan, P. and Duff, P. (1994). Same task, different activities: Analysis of SLA task from an activity theory perspective. In J.P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskyan approaches to second language research* (pp. 173-194). Norwood NJ: Ablex.

How does classroom management interact with lesson planning?

**There is frequently some tension between
our intentions and what we actually do**

Getting the right balance between these two levels of planning
is a delicate matter

This is particularly true when we use
communicative/task based approaches to foreign language teaching
because these approaches tend to be
student- rather than **teacher-**centered

How does classroom management interact with lesson planning?

**Achieving this desired balance is a skill that has to be learned
and constantly refined over time**

Even experienced teachers don't always get this right

But it's vital for all teachers to be able
to recognize potentially valuable teaching/learning moments
and to know when, if necessary,
we should temporarily abandon our lesson plan
and seize a pedagogical moment on the fly

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

For present purposes, I'm going to use the lesson plan that you have on your hand out to show you what a communicative, task-based lesson plan looks like

Note:

There is enough material in this lesson plan for about **180 minutes** of instruction for beginners.

This is important:
the picture drawing task I am about to show you
is the basis for a **series of five tasks**
that may be spread over **a week or more**
of classroom instruction

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

Note also that:

Task 1 in this lesson plan is an **information gap task**
- that is, not all students have access to the same information -
and the information gap that results provides opportunities
for real communication between students

The traditional order of **teaching grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation first**
and THEN
giving students the opportunity **to practice what they have learned**
is typically switched

So in communicative, task based teaching we ask the students
to try to communicate as best as they can
with their current grammatical and vocabulary resources
and THEN
follow up with grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation teaching

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

The parts of the lesson plan instructions that are highlighted in blue tell the students how they will accomplish the tasks

The parts of the lesson plan instructions that are highlighted in red tell the students how they will accomplish the tasks

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example



Figure 2.1 Basis for a task-based activity in the classroom.

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

1. **Picture description task 1 (focus on fluency; small group work).**

Time: About 40 minutes

- **Story tellers:** Get into groups of four. Plan for about 5 minutes how you are going to describe the picture to the story drawer at the blackboard. Your task is to describe the picture to the story drawer, so that s/he can draw it on the blackboard.
- **Story drawer:** When your classmates describe the picture to you, try to reproduce the picture they are describing as well as you can. **Be sure to ask as many questions as you need in order to clarify the instructions you receive from your classmates (VERY IMPORTANT!)**
- **Standard of graphic accuracy** (= how accurate does the drawing have to be for you to complete this task successfully?):
 - You will be successful if you are able to produce an approximate version of the original picture. Don't worry if there are errors of detail.

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

2. **Debriefing task (focus on accuracy; teacher fronted). Time: 20-30 minutes**
 - With the help of the teacher, compare the original picture with the one on the blackboard and evaluate whether you have met the standard of graphic accuracy specified in Task 1.

3. **Dialog task (focus on accuracy; pair work): Time: 20 minutes**
 - Once you have finished Task 2, get into pairs and write up the story as a dialog. Once you have finished writing your dialogs, some of you will perform your dialogs in front of the class.

4. **Speaking → Writing task (focus on accuracy; simple past/continuous past; pair work): Time: 20 minutes**
 - Look at the story (boxes 1, 2, and 3) in the top part of the picture. Notice that the date when this story took place is January 26, and that the date on the wall of the hospital room is January 27. Now retell the story orally from the patient's perspective ("it was raining very hard. There was lots of thunder and lightning ... I crashed into a tree.")

What does a good lesson plan look like?

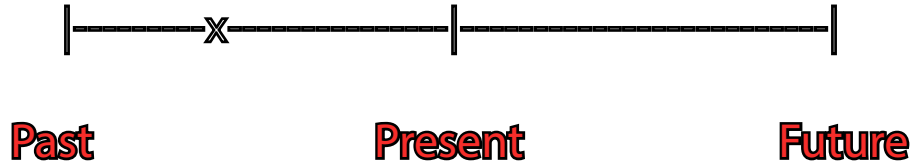
An empirical example

Grammar note

Past continuous



Past simple



What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

- Now change partners and rewrite the story from the perspective of the police officer who investigated the accident (“The suspect said that it was raining very hard ... He claimed that the accident occurred at 10.20 am”). Time: 20 minutes

5. Final Evaluation: Picture description task 2 (focus on fluency; small group work). Time: About 30 minutes

- In groups, draw a picture that you think is more difficult to reproduce than the one in Task 1. The teacher will select the best picture.
- Repeat the procedures used in Task 1 but with a different picture that is more difficult to describe than the first one.

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

Background information for the teacher:

For Task 1, Divide the students into groups of roughly 4 students. Choose one student who is outgoing and not afraid to take risks, who will be asked to be the **Story Drawer**, that is, the person who will draw the picture on the blackboard based on the instructions from the other students.

Then distribute the picture to the groups of students who will be the **Story Tellers** (Only give one picture per group: make sure the groups do not unintentionally show the picture to the student at the blackboard!).

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

Background information for the teacher:

Teacher's role: In Task 1, you are primarily a **facilitator** and **time keeper**.

So make sure the students keep to the time limits you have set.

Remember: This is an **information gap task**.

So do NOT pre-teach vocabulary or grammar.

Do NOT intervene in Task 1, even if the students ask for your help (for example with grammar and vocabulary).

Force them to complete the task as best as they can **with their current linguistic resources**.

Keep notes of the problems the students have with grammar and vocabulary. If you have access to a video camera or a smart phone, record the tasks and make a note of when important episodes happen during the course of the recording.

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

Background information for the teacher:

NOTE:

You can use Task 1 with all levels of students:

Beginners, Intermediates or Native Speakers/Very Advanced speakers of English

You do this by changing the **standards of graphic accuracy**

that must be achieved by each level of proficiency

and by giving **more time to beginners** and **less time to advanced students**

This determines whether the finished task has been successfully completed
in the debriefing work in Task 2

What does a good lesson plan look like?

An empirical example

Background information for the teacher:

NOTE

Based on 27 years of experience teaching these materials as part of a demonstration lesson with students ranging from Beginners to Native Speakers/Very Advanced users of English, we can say that the following kinds of language are generated by Task 1:

Imperatives; the language of spatial relationships; the language of description (present tense, present continuous); figurative language; repair (comprehension checks, clarification requests, circumlocution)

An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

**Let us now see how one teacher (me)
interpreted and implemented this lesson plan
through a variety of classroom management techniques**

For present purposes, let us analyze how T
gave oral instructions that interpreted
the written instructions in the materials
that we have just looked at

The purpose of this second part of the talk
is to show **you**
how **you** can find out
how **you** give oral instructions
in **your** own classes

This can be a very good way for **you**
to take charge of **your own** professional development

An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Why are teachers' instructions so important?

Teachers' oral instructions are extremely common
(typically, all lessons begin with them)
but they are also surprisingly complex things

In fact, giving good instructions is a complicated business
and must be part of the classroom management skills
that **all** teachers need to develop

That is,
all teachers have to figure out how to react to
unexpected developments
as and when they occur

More specifically, we need to be able to **multitask on the fly**
as we simultaneously try to **keep the momentum of a class going**
while also **dealing with unanticipated events** in a productive way

An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Here is an overview of how I gave the oral instructions that re-interpreted the written instructions for Tasks 1 and 2 on your hand out

The complete set of instructions I gave in the demonstration class lasted just under **11** minutes (these students were beginners)

During this time, **16** different sets of events had to be managed by T

An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Of these 16 events, four were unexpected:

In Event 4, Sandra (the student at BB) curtsayed
(not important from a classroom management perspective,
but this got a laugh from the other students)

In Events 7 + 8 + 9, 11 + 12, and 14 + 15, respectively,
three different students came in late
(very important from a classroom management perspective)

The first student came to class 5 1/2 minutes late
The second student came to class 8 minutes late
The third student came to class 11 1/2 minutes late

These last three events forced T to multitask:

That is say, to make split second decisions on the fly regarding how to keep the class going while also including the late students in the unfolding activity

An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

**Here are the details of what each event was
and how long it lasted**

NOTE:

In the slides that follow,
each event is identified by the time codes in the video
The time codes are highlighted in **red**

Unexpected events are highlighted in **blue**
and marked with ****double asterisks****

An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Here are the events:

Event 1

T gives a general introduction
to the demonstration lesson: 1.47-2.48



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 2

T describes Task 1 in more detail: [2.48-3.08](#)



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 3

T describes Task 2: 3.10-3.39





An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 5

T distributes the handout
and gives instructions: 3.56-4.24



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 6

T sets up the groups: 4.34-4.54



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 7

T gives the students in groups time to plan
what they are going to say
and explains the expected standards
of graphic accuracy: 4.55-5.20

Unexpected Event 1: Late Student 1 comes in at 5.13-5.27



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 8

T gives the student at BB her instructions: 5.28-5.58



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 9

T repeats his instructions for Late student 1
(in hearing of whole class): 6.00-6.40



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 10

T tells the students in groups to start planning
and explains how to do this: 6.40-7.10



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 11

T gives student at BB more instructions
about how to get information so she can draw the picture: 7.10-8.12

Unexpected Event 2: Late Student 2 comes in at 8.08



Giving oral instructions

Event 12

T repeats instructions for late Student 2 (to Student 2): 8.12-8.48



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 13

Students in groups plan their instructions: 8.48-11.11



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 14

T gives information to whole class about
how much time each group will have: 11.09-11.35

Unexpected Event 3: Late student 3 comes in at 11.30



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 15

T deals with Student 3 and tells her to ask other group members
what the task is: 11.30-11.45



An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

Event 16

T gives final advice and starts Task 1: 11.48-12.21

“start with big picture → move on to details”

T starts Task 1 at 12.18



Conclusions

**Lesson planning and classroom management
are complementary aspects of planning**

Lesson plans (= task-as-workplan) represent
our written intentions of what we intend to do

Classroom management (= task-as-activity)
is how we interpret our written intentions **in real time**

Classroom management therefore involves
constantly making important,
split second pedagogical decisions
throughout the course of every lesson we teach

**Good classroom management is a learned skill
that must be constantly refined throughout
teachers' professional careers**

THANKS FOR LISTENING AND GOOD LUCK!