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

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This webinar + the accompanying handout may be downloaded from the Presentations section of:

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Outline of the talk

What is a lesson plan?
What is classroom management?
How does classroom management interact with lesson planning?

Any brief comments or questions?
What does a good lesson plan look like?
An empirical example

Any brief comments or questions?
An empirical example of classroom management:
Giving oral instructions

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.

Learning how to write good lesson plans is a particularly important skill for new teachers.

At first, writing a good lesson plan is going to be difficult and very time consuming: You will probably want to plan your every move and to control every moment in the class.

As you become more experienced, you won’t need to write everything down anymore — in fact, your “lesson plan” may end up being just a series of notes to yourself — and you will be able to concentrate more on managing the flow of the lesson.
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.

Good classroom management involves interpreting and implementing your lesson plan in such a way that you are able to achieve your goals and objectives in an efficient yet flexible way.

This means that sometimes what actually happens in your class does not reflect what your lesson plan said should happen.

This phenomenon happens very frequently!

More specifically, depending on the outcomes of the split second decisions that we constantly have to make as teachers, this can be either a good or a bad thing.
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:
How does classroom management interact with lesson planning?

So, 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.

Consequently, as teachers, we have to be ready to give up some control at both levels of task and activity.

And we have to do this in a way that is pedagogically valuable so that students can simultaneously communicate in English and learn new language in the process.
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.
ANY BRIEF COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?
What does a good lesson plan look like?
An empirical example

There are many considerations to bear in mind when developing a lesson plan.

For present purposes, I will concentrate on just three characteristics that all good lesson plans have:

Good lesson plans tell the teacher and/or students:

1. what is to be achieved in each task
2. how the task is to be achieved
3. how a task relates to the next

Note that Characteristic #3 provides a framework for grading and sequencing material in a succession of tasks.
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 handout to exemplify these three principles in action.

Note:

This is a short version of this lesson plan.

The complete long version is also available for download from the Presentations section of:

http://numamarkee.com/publications
What does a good lesson plan look like?
An empirical example

Let’s now look at Task 1 and concentrate for the moment on the first two of the three criteria that we identified before:

These are:

1. what is to be achieved in each task?
2. how the task is to be achieved

Picture description task 1: (focus on fluency; small group work)
how the teacher should set up the task
how the students in the small groups should plan to do the task
and what their task is

how the student at the blackboard should interact
with the students in small groups
as s/he draws the picture
What does a good lesson plan look like?
An empirical example

The continuation of Task 1 on page 2 also specifies:

what standards of graphic accuracy must be achieved by Beginners, Intermediates or Native Speakers/Very Advanced speakers of English to judge whether the finished task has been successfully completed in the debriefing work in Task 2

what the teacher’s role should be during the implementation of the picture description task and how to manage the classroom activity in a non-interventionist way

what language this task can be expected to generate:
Imperatives; the language of spatial relationships; the language of description (present tense, present continuous); figurative language; repair (comprehension checks, clarification requests, circumlocution)
Task 2 on page 2 specifies:

Task 2: **Debriefing task (focus on accuracy; teacher fronted)**
The bullets in this task describe how the teacher should debrief the students

Similarly, Task 3 on page 2 specifies:

3. **Dialog writing task (focus on accuracy; pair work)**
What does a good lesson plan look like?
An empirical example

Let’s now examine how
the third criterion of good lesson planning
is also integrated into these materials:

These three tasks also illustrate
how the principle of grading and sequencing
across tasks is implemented in these materials:

More specifically, the lesson moves from:

a focus on fluency mediated by small group work in Task 1
to
a teacher fronted focus on accuracy in Task 2
to
a focus on accuracy mediated by pair work in Task 3

Etc. etc.
ANY BRIEF COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?
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.
An empirical example of classroom management: Giving oral instructions

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

Most importantly, they are not just word for word oral versions of the written instructions found in materials like the ones we have just looked at.

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.
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 handout.

The complete set of instructions I gave in the demonstration class lasted just under 11 minutes.

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:

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

In Events 7, 11 and 14, 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 affected the implementation
of the lesson quite considerably
and so had to be managed on the fly by T
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 and are highlighted in magenta.

Unexpected events are highlighted in light blue and marked with double red 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

**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

Event 4
T selects student at BB (Sandra): 3.40-3.55
**Sandra curtseys at 3.53**
An empirical example of classroom management:
Giving oral instructions

Event 5
T distributes the handout and gives instructions: 3.56-4.24

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**

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

**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**

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

**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

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.
KHOB KHUN KRUB!

THANKS FOR LISTENING AND GOOD LUCK!

ANY QUESTIONS?