



UNIT 2.

STRUCTURE OF A LESSON. CLEAR GOALS

AIM

Presentation the tips for preparing lesson plan and creating clear goals

IMONED consortium

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Unit 2. Structure of a lesson. Clear goals

2.1. Structure of a lesson

Each lesson should have a planned structure where each of its parts is connected to the others and lead to gaining a specified goal. Activities during the lesson are like successive steps of stairs – one follows the other. So preparing a logical structure of a lesson in a lesson plan is as important as it is difficult.

General structure

1. Start a lesson by reviewing the materials from the previous lesson/s. It can have different forms: open discussion, questions, showing the poster with main information and asking students to expand the topic. You can also prepare a quiz in google forms or play Kahoot (kahoot.com).
2. Present goals. Make students aware of what they will learn and what will be the most important.
3. Present new material in small steps. Remember about various methods and tools (movies, posters, guiding questions).
4. After each step check the knowledge of the students – prepare short exercises that will give your students the possibility to use information in practice and consolidate new material in their memory.
5. Provide systematic feedback, tell your students what was perfect and what needs additional work. Dispel all doubts.

Time for questions and discussion. Let your students express their impressions about the topic and ask questions. You can let other students answer. Such kind of summary phase will be far more effective than just repeating information.

Guidelines for individual work. Encourage your students to look for additional information, watch a video about the topic, read an article. Give examples. Propose interesting homework.

Practical tips for preparing the lesson plan

A good lesson plan increases the effectiveness of the teaching process as it shapes the lesson phases in a logical order and gives a teacher the possibility to monitor the lesson progress and make modulations.

Some practical rules are worth knowing in the process of preparing the lesson plan.

- Think about the group for which you are preparing a lesson. What are their needs and interests? What methods will be suitable for them? What kind of work is most effective in this group?
- First of all, set the goals. What kind of knowledge and skills do you want to teach? Which are the most important and which are additional? Try to make the goals as practical as possible. Connect them with real-life needs.
- Choose methods that will be the most suitable for gaining the goals in the particular group. Be creative, think out of the box. Surprising, even shocking, methods make students interested and help them remember the material.

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- The lesson plan should be flexible. You never know what will happen during the lesson. Some issues need more time in one group and less in another one. Sometimes an amazing discussion starts – when your lesson plan is flexible you do not need to cut it down because you know you still have time to complete the lesson plan. Also, be ready for changes: if the group proposes another exercise or if you suddenly come up with another idea, do it.
 - Prepare your own exercises. Do not rely on activities prepared by the others. Expand your lessons with activities designed specifically for a given group.
 - Remember about forms of evaluation. Think about how could you check the knowledge and skills of the students. Put very short testing activities in different parts of the lesson.

Lecture, discussion – how to prepare them?

Lecture:

- A lecture should not be very long, especially during online classes. 5 minutes of explanation is enough, then you can ask students to do some exercises, look for the information themselves, discuss, etc.
- Aim for 2 or 3 main points. Highlight them and explain.
- Mark clearly which information are most important.
- You can use catching questions that will keep the attention of the students and help them follow your reasoning.
- Help yourself with the pictures, presentations, posters, etc.
- Use examples from students' life and their scope of interest. Jokes are not forbidden, they are even desirable.
- Do not forget to prepare an exercise that would check students' understanding of the lecture.

Discussion:

- Prepare the discussion before the lesson. Choose questions and adjust the proper form of the discussion.
- During the discussion do not talk too much. Let the students express their opinions, polemize, find the answers themselves. Be a moderator, give the voice, make sure the discussion does not deviate from the topic.
- When preparing questions think about the goals: questions can be very specific and unambiguous but you can also prepare general and ambiguous questions to arouse students' curiosity and stimulate their creativity.
- Think about how to engage all the students. A talk between a teacher and two students does not meet the goals.
- Make the discussion dynamic – it cannot be boring! Ask tricky and not obvious questions. Require specific, condensed answers.
- There are a lot of interesting forms of discussion.
 - You can ask a general question and ask students to write their answers on sticky notes on Padlet. Then ask students to match the similar answers into groups and name the categories. At the end ask the students to discuss the answers.

- Ask one student to give an argument, then ask another student to comment. Ask the rest if they agree and what are their arguments.
- Create small groups of 2 students on Microsoft Teams, Zoom or another online tool. Ask them to discuss a question for 2 minutes. Then create a group of 4 students and ask them to discuss the problem once again. Then do it together.
- You can also propose an asynchronous discussion as homework. You can create a WhatsApp group and ask students to talk about the issue in the afternoon, each of them in their own time (each student should write at least one argument).

2.2. Clear and specific didactic and learning goals

The ability to set clear goals is the first step of effective teaching. It helps put the piece of a lesson into the wide learning context and keep one educational strategy during the whole teaching process. Thinking about the goals, you determine the “why” that stays behind all the activities during the lesson.

There are a few practical guidelines that help create clear learning goals.

- When you prepare a lesson plan and set goals, ask yourself specific questions:
 - What will students know after the lesson? What skills will they get?
 - How students will be able to show that they learned the material?
 - How can I define the success connected with this lesson?
- Make the goals challenging but achievable.
- Set large and small goals. The large ones do not need to be achieved during one lesson but it is good to be aware that the lesson is one step to accomplish the big goal.
- Small goals should be very specific.

Example:

Do not write: “learning about the literature of the second half of the 19th-century”.

Instead of creating a few specific and clear goals. Write:

“students will be able to explain the main features of literature of the second half of the 19th-century”

“students will be able to name the most important books of the writers of the second half of the 19th-century”

“students will be able to explain the concepts of realism and naturalism”

- Tell your students about the goals and how are you going to achieve them. Formulate the goals in a way that will be interesting for the students and will boost their interest. You can also ask them what are their ideas to achieve these goals.
- Remember about the goals when you prepare the testing activities. The exercises should lead to the achievement of the goals.

In short, the goals of the effective lesson should be:

- specific,
- measurable,
- achievable,
- realistic,
- interesting.

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