Enhancing learner autonomy in ELT through effective lesson planning in Uzbek schools

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' perspectives on lesson planning can differ greatly from person to person. This study examines the most important aspects of lesson planning for building learner autonomy in English Language Teaching (ELT). Additionally, many students of foreign languages have few opportunities to practice their target language (TL) outside of the classroom, making it crucial for aspiring learners to use that language as frequently as possible. The goal, therefore, is to build a practical foundation for language use in the classroom, working towards a point where students can learn and practice on their own – in other words, to foster learner autonomy through effective lesson planning. To this end, it is important to make the classroom experience as encouraging as possible, both in attitude and material. A lesson that is both relevant and meaningful to students will improve their willingness to participate, promote learner creativity, eliminate boredom, and increase motivation. Planned classes should be realistic about the length and difficulty of each activity, and instructors should be prepared to "fill in the gaps" when activities take too much, or too little, time. This paper analyzes and provides suggestions for enhancing learner autonomy in ELT through effective lesson planning in Uzbek schools – specifically in the context of the English-Speaking Nation (ESN) training program, which addresses some of the challenges faced by Uzbek schools. The authors hope that the current article serves as a guideline for future English language teachers on lesson planning and promotes learner autonomy.

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O'zbek maktablarida ingliz tili o'qitishda darsni samarali rejalashtirish orqali o'quvchilarning avtonomiyasini takomillashtirish

ANNOTATSIYA

O'qituvchilarning dars rejalashtirishga bo'lgan qarashlari, nazariyalari bir-biridan sezilarli darajada farq qilishi mumkin. Mazkur maqola ingliz tili o'qitish (ELT) sohasida o'quvchilar ta'lim olish mustaqilligini shakllantirish uchun dars rejalashtirishning eng muhim jihatlarini tadqiq qiladi. Ko'pchilik xorijiy til o'rganuvchilarining o'rganayotgan tilni (TL) darsdan tashqarida qo'llash imkoniyati kam, shu bois ular ushbu tilni imkon qadar ko'proq qo'llashi muhimdir. Maqsad – dars davomida tilni amaliy qo'llash uchun asos yaratish va o'quvchilar mustaqil ravishda ta'lim olishlari va mashqlarni muntazam ravishda qilishlari zarurdir, ya'ni dars rejalashtirish orqali o'quvchilar mustaqilligini shakllantirishdir. Buning uchun dars jarayonidagi tajribani ijobiy qilish, o'quv materiallari va o'qituvchi-o'quvchi munosabatni rag'batlantiruvchi darajada tashkil etish zarur. Ta'lim oluvchilar ehtiyojlariga mos va ma'no jihatdan ahamiyatli bo'lgan dars ularning ishtirok etishga bo'lgan ishtiyoqini oshiradi, ijodkorlikni rag'batlantiradi va motivatsiyani oshiradi. Rejalashtirilgan darslar har bir faoliyatning davomiyligi va qiyinligiga nisbatan realistik bo'lishi kerak, shuningdek, o'qituvchilar faoliyatlarga taqsimlangan vaqtdan unumli foydalanishlari kerak. Ushbu maqola o'zbek maktablarida, xususan, ingliz tilining ESN (English-Speaking Nation) dasturi doirasida dars rejalashtirish orqali o'quvchilar mustaqilligini oshirish uchun tavsiyalar beradi va mavjud muammolarni hal etishga qaratilgan. Ushbu maqola bo'lajak ingliz tili o'qituvchilari uchun dars rejalashtirish bo'yicha qo'llanma bo'lib xizmat qilishi va o'quvchilar mustaqil ta'lim olish qobiliyatlarini samaradorligini oshirishga xizmat qiladi.

Повышение автономности учащихся при обучении английского языка через эффективное планирование уроков в узбекских школах

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье анализируются ключевые аспекты планирования уроков, направленные на развитие автономии учащихся в процессе изучения английского языка. Учитывается, что многие студенты, изучающие иностранные языки, сталкиваются с ограниченными возможностями для практики вне класса. Статья подчеркивает необходимость частого использования

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английского языка в образовательной среде, что особенно важно для начинающих учеников. Исследование нацелено на создание практической основы для использования языка в классе и на развитие учащихся, способных самостоятельно учиться и практиковаться. Отмечается важность мотивирующих уроков, актуальных и значимых для учащихся, что способствует их участию, творческому развитию и повышает мотивацию. При планировании уроков учителя должны учитывать реалистичность продолжительности и сложности каждого задания, а также быть готовы к корректировке времени, необходимого для выполнения заданий. Статья также рассматривает рекомендации для повышения автономии учащихся в узбекских школах в контексте программы English-Speaking Nation, что поможет решить ряд проблем, с которыми сталкиваются местные образовательные учреждения. Авторы надеются, что эта статья станет полезным руководством для будущих преподавателей английского языка и будет способствовать развитию автономии учащихся.

INTRODUCTION

Lesson planning is a fundamental part of delivering learner-centered, objective-focused English lessons. However, creating holistic, well-sequenced lesson plans can be challenging for teachers. Many teachers in multiple regions of Uzbekistan have been found, both observationally and in professional training, to rely solely on daily lesson guides to present their lessons. Although these guides are helpful, depending on them alone can fail to meet overall learning objectives and create disconnected lessons.

Effective lesson planning plays a crucial role in fostering learner autonomy by providing a structured yet flexible framework that empowers students to take charge of their learning. By clearly outlining objectives, resources, and activities, well-designed lesson plans create a guideline that leads students throughout the learning process. This structure helps learners understand both what is expected of them and what they need to achieve, allowing them to set personal goals and monitor their progress. Moreover, when lesson plans incorporate opportunities for choice and self-directed learning, learners are encouraged to explore topics of personal interest and develop both critical thinking and problem-solving skills – all of which are essential for autonomous learning.

In addition to promoting self-regulation, effective lesson planning also supports learner autonomy by fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment. By including diverse and interactive activities such as group work, discussions, and hands-on projects, teachers can create a dynamic classroom atmosphere that motivates learners to actively participate and take ownership of their learning. Furthermore, lesson plans that integrate formative assessments and feedback mechanisms enable students to reflect on their performance, identify areas for improvement, and take practical steps to enhance their understanding. This ongoing cycle of planning, acting, and reflecting nurtures a sense of responsibility and independence in learners, ultimately leading to greater autonomy and lifelong learning skills.

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The rapid development of international collaboration throughout the first part of the 20th century has significantly affected the teaching of English as one of the major world languages. English language teaching attracted the close interest of educators and has since developed into its unique part of the global education system. Still, while interest shifted to English as the focus of instruction, the means of that instruction remained the same. Most teachers in Uzbek schools remained "textbook-based" teachers, reading and lecturing off the same textbooks used year after year without branching off into interactive, or native-authentic, materials. This more-academic, less practical style of teaching and learning is further reinforced in higher education institutions, which give more theory-based writing and research assignments rather than practical ones. As a result, some English language teachers graduate and go to work without sufficient knowledge of, and experience in, teaching. Still, even with a background that has historically prioritized theory over application, most instructors will be able to achieve huge improvements in student participation and learning through the use of interactive lesson activities and the adoption of other contemporary language teaching principles. Creating and following a robust lesson plan, in conjunction with the language learning and teaching concepts, forms and enhances 21st-century English language teachers who are both autonomous and productive – much to the benefit of the student-learners studying under them.

In this vein, this article presents the results of a professional training course for 18,000 English language teachers across the Republic of Uzbekistan, utilizing the training and cascade-style training conducted within the framework of the English Speaking Nation (ESN) Program of the American Councils in Uzbekistan. The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners serves as the foundation for lesson planning, applicable for all grades and across all students, including young adolescent learners [9]. This project took place within the framework of the ESN project of the American Councils on International Education in 2020–2024.

The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners are universal guidelines derived from extensive research in language pedagogy and language acquisition theory. These principles serve as benchmarks for teaching excellence, designed to enhance the quality of English language instruction. Each principle offers a framework for creating effective, inclusive, and engaging learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of English language learners. By incorporating these principles, educators can ensure that their teaching methods are grounded in proven strategies that promote language development and learner autonomy.

Previous works [7] have already addressed issues related to the development of Content-based Instruction (CBI) and methods of enhancing linguistic competence. This article, comparatively, focuses specifically on the concept of lesson planning in ELT, including elements (objectives, sequencing, interaction, differentiation, assessment, materials, contingency plan), stages, and *reflection in* this area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lesson planning is as old as teaching itself, but continues to develop and grow in pace with new technological advances. As any modern motorist or taxi driver needs a GPS to reach a new destination, modern teachers need to plan lessons to lead their students to this terra nova of studying. Lesson planning is a core of teacher training programs, and it is one of the main focuses of the ESN Program, which has worked in Uzbekistan from 2020 to 2024. Having served as Core Trainers in this program, the authors share their

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experience in teaching lesson planning to other teachers, focusing on what is specific about lesson planning in ELT and what is new in this for English teachers from Uzbekistan.

Designing a strong lesson plan involves more than looking at a daily guide. It includes identifying the overall unit and lesson objectives, choosing engaging activities that are age and level appropriate, and selecting assessment methods to determine whether students attained the objectives [6, 8, 9]. Lesson planning also consists of considering new teaching techniques and methodologies to use during activities and assessments, as well as reflecting on the successes and challenges of the lesson.

Views on lesson planning vary from time to time to accommodate the demands of strategies and tactics meant to achieve a specific objective. Lesson planning has a relatively small number of theoretical perspectives, most of which concentrate on a language's vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation; more recently, approaches have focused on more specific language skills like speaking, writing, listening, and reading [1]. Lesson plans are crucial because they enable language instructors to maximize class time by being purposeful, well-organized, and topic-focused. Because they know they are prepared and will maximize class time, teachers who have a well-crafted lesson plan can also enter the classroom with greater confidence. Furthermore, useful lesson plans can serve as a record of class time, enabling competent, introspective educators to reevaluate, assess their instruction (what worked and what didn't), and then make improvements going forward. Lesson planning can be especially helpful for seasoned teachers, even though it might seem more crucial for new instructors.

To help novice teachers develop their lesson plans, the trainers will walk trainees through holistic lesson planning. This consists of analyzing a textbook unit, identifying the overall objectives of the unit and lessons, and determining which textbook activities will best help students reach the objective. This also entails determining learning techniques to make the textbook activities engaging, as well as using resources and activities outside the textbook to engage students and promote learning.

Sequencing and structuring elements of the lesson procedure are key factors in language teaching. Structuring and sequencing language materials, teaching methodology, elements, and activities are important for the organization of a good lesson. Opinions may differ from topic to topic on the best practices for teaching, ranging from a more traditional to a postmodern point of view.

The main elements of a strong lesson plan are objectives, instructions, activities, assessment, timing, learners, warm-up topics, and materials, according to TESOL instructors Lisa Mann, Gena Bennett, and Nancy Ackles. A good lesson plan helps teachers make the best use of class time, provides more confidence to teachers, and allows opportunities for reflection and improvement – even for experienced teachers, who can draw upon their years or decades of experience and learn how best to integrate modern techniques. Although a textbook is a useful tool for teaching, it shouldn't be the only way that students learn; the idea is to teach them to use the textbook as part of a larger lesson plan rather than as their sole daily activity.

DISCUSSION

The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners represent a comprehensive set of guidelines aimed at enhancing the quality of English language instruction. These principles have been developed by the TESOL International Association and are grounded in decades of research in language pedagogy and language acquisition

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theory. They serve as universal benchmarks for teaching excellence and are designed to support educators in delivering effective and inclusive English language programs [11].

The principles offer a robust framework for teachers, guiding them through essential aspects of language instruction from understanding their learners to collaborating within a professional community. By adhering to these principles, educators can create optimal learning environments that foster language development and learner autonomy. TESOL Press has also published a series of books and quick guides that provide additional resources and practical applications of these principles [12]. These 6 Principles include:

- Know your learners
- Create conditions for language learning
- Design high-quality lessons for language development
- Adapt lesson delivery as needed
- Monitor and assess student language development
- Engage and collaborate within a community of practice

These principles are not only integral to classroom instruction but also extend to the broader roles teachers play as mentors, advocates, and resources for their colleagues. By implementing these 6 principles, educators can ensure that their teaching practices are aligned with the highest standards of excellence in English language education.

In this article, it was considered permissible to focus on the 6 principles of model education as the basis of lesson planning. They were analyzed in detail, and, when used in the course of the lesson, will greatly help students to become independent language learners.

Principle 1: Know your learners

Principle 1 emphasizes the importance of understanding students' backgrounds to create more effective and engaging lessons. By learning about their individual students' families, languages, cultures, and educational experiences, teachers can tailor their teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of their class. This foundational knowledge helps teachers build meaningful connections with their students, fostering a supportive learning environment. Additionally, by incorporating students' cultural and linguistic resources into the classroom, teachers create a more inclusive and relatable learning experience, which empowers students to take ownership of their education.

Furthermore, by embracing and leveraging the resources that learners bring to the classroom, teachers can enhance learning outcomes. This practice involves recognizing and valuing the unique contributions each student makes and using these contributions to enrich the educational experience for all students. As a result, students feel respected and valued, which boosts their confidence and motivation to engage actively in their learning process. This empowerment is a crucial aspect of fostering learner autonomy, as students become more self-directed and invested in their educational journey.

Principle 2: Create Conditions for Language Learning

Principle 2 underscores the necessity of creating a supportive classroom environment conducive for language learning. Teachers are tasked with establishing a classroom culture where students feel comfortable and safe, which is crucial for effective language acquisition. This involves making thoughtful decisions about the physical setup of the classroom, the selection of materials, and fostering positive social interactions among students.

This principle promotes learner autonomy by focusing on reducing student anxiety and building trust within the classroom. When teachers create an emotionally positive and

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organized environment, students are more likely to participate actively and take risks in their learning. By demonstrating high expectations and belief in the success of all learners, teachers empower students to strive for their best, fostering a sense of agency and self-efficacy. This supportive atmosphere encourages students to take charge of their learning journey, increasing their motivation and engagement.

Moreover, by planning instruction that enhances and supports student motivation, teachers can create lessons that are both challenging and attainable. This involves using a variety of instructional strategies that cater to different learning styles and interests, making the learning process more dynamic and enjoyable. When students see their efforts leading to success, they become more motivated to continue learning independently. Thus, creating optimal conditions for language learning not only improves immediate educational outcomes but also cultivates a long-term, self-sustaining desire to learn.

Principle 3: Design High-Quality Lessons for Language Development

Principle 3 emphasizes the importance of designing lessons that are not only meaningful but also effective in promoting language development. Teachers are encouraged to plan their lessons with clear learning objectives and to communicate these objectives to their students. This clarity helps students understand the purpose of their activities and how they contribute to their overall language development.

This principle fosters learner autonomy by encouraging teachers to create lessons that are engaging, relevant, and tailored to the needs of their students. By incorporating varied approaches, techniques, and modalities, teachers can provide and enhance input in ways that resonate with different learning styles. This differentiation ensures that all students, regardless of their English proficiency levels, can access and benefit from the lessons. Engaging learners in the use and practice of authentic language on meaningful topics helps them see the real-world applications of their learning, thereby increasing their motivation and ownership of the learning process.

Furthermore, designing lessons that promote the use of learning strategies, critical thinking, and self-regulated learning empowers students to become more independent learners. Teachers can achieve this by incorporating activities that require students to think critically, solve problems, and reflect on their learning strategies. By encouraging self-regulated learning, teachers help students develop the skills and confidence needed to manage their own learning. This autonomy in learning is crucial for language learners, as it enables them to continue their language development outside the classroom and throughout their lives.

Principle 4: Adapt Lesson Delivery as Needed

Principle 4 focuses on the necessity for teachers to be flexible and responsive during lesson delivery. Effective teachers continuously assess their students' comprehension and engagement, using these observations to inform adjustments to their instruction. This dynamic approach ensures that lessons are meeting the learners' needs and that all students are making progress toward the learning objectives.

This principle fosters learner autonomy by promoting a responsive teaching environment where students' needs and responses guide instructional decisions. Teachers who frequently check student comprehension can quickly identify and address any difficulties students are experiencing. This real-time assessment allows teachers to modify their talk, the tasks, or the materials to better align with students' current understanding and skill levels. By doing so, teachers create a learning environment that is both supportive and challenging, encouraging students to take an active role in their learning process.

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Moreover, adapting lesson delivery involves using various forms of scaffolding to provide equitable access to content for all learners. Scaffolding techniques such as modeling, providing examples, and breaking tasks into manageable steps help students build their understanding incrementally. This approach not only supports struggling learners but also allows more advanced students to be appropriately challenged. By creating a flexible and responsive learning environment, teachers empower students to take control of their learning journey, fostering independence and self-regulation.

Principle 5: Monitor and Assess Student Language Development

Principle 5 emphasizes the importance of regularly monitoring and assessing students' language development to ensure effective learning progression. Recognizing that language learners progress at varying rates, teachers must gather and analyze data on student performance to tailor their instruction and support to meet individual needs. This continuous assessment helps to advance students' language skills more efficiently.

This principle fosters learner autonomy by promoting an environment where feedback and assessment are integral parts of the learning process. Teachers who monitor student errors and provide ongoing, strategic feedback help students understand their strengths and areas for improvement. This targeted feedback is crucial for guiding students towards self-correction and independent learning. By designing varied and valid assessments, teachers can capture a comprehensive picture of student learning, ensuring that all students receive the appropriate support to advance their language development.

Moreover, effective monitoring and assessment enable teachers to make informed decisions about when and how to provide feedback or correction. By understanding different types of feedback and their appropriate usage, teachers can offer constructive guidance that empowers students to take charge of their learning. The use of diverse assessment methods ensures that evaluations are fair and reflective of each student's abilities and progress. This approach not only supports immediate learning goals but also encourages students to develop self-assessment skills, enhancing their ability to monitor and direct their own learning journey.

Principle 6: Engage and Collaborate Within a Community of Practice

Principle 6 underscores the significance of professional collaboration and continuous learning among educators to enhance the support provided to language learners. Teachers are encouraged to work together, sharing insights and strategies to improve programming, instruction, and advocacy for their students. Engaging in a community of practice allows teachers to refine their skills and stay updated with the latest developments in the field of English language teaching.

This principle fosters learner autonomy by creating a supportive network where teachers can co-plan and co-teach, ensuring that instruction is well-rounded and responsive to student needs. By collaborating with colleagues, teachers can draw on a diverse range of experiences and expertise, leading to more innovative and effective teaching practices. This collaborative approach not only benefits the teachers but also provides students with a richer and more cohesive learning experience, as they receive instruction that is informed by multiple perspectives and areas of expertise.

Furthermore, engaging in reflective practice and ongoing professional development allows teachers to continually assess and improve their teaching methods. Reflective practice involves critically analyzing one's teaching to identify areas for improvement and to celebrate successes. This self-awareness leads to professional growth, as teachers

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become more adept at adapting their instruction to meet the evolving needs of their students. By participating in various forms of professional development, teachers can stay informed about new research, tools, and techniques, ensuring that their teaching remains relevant and effective. This commitment to continuous improvement empowers teachers to provide the best possible support for their students, fostering an environment where learner autonomy can thrive.

Applying the six principles of exemplary teaching – engaging students, creating a supportive environment, using diverse teaching strategies, fostering higher-order thinking, assessing learning, and reflecting on teaching – can significantly enhance activities like "Find Someone Who...", "Personal Inventory", and "3-2-1 Uzbekistan". For instance, "Find Someone Who..." and "Personal Inventory" engage students by encouraging interaction and collaboration, creating a supportive and dynamic classroom atmosphere. These activities utilize diverse strategies by incorporating movement and social interaction, catering to different learning styles. The "3-2-1 Uzbekistan" activity, where students list three things they learned, two interesting facts, and one question they still have, fosters higher-order thinking and provides a quick formative assessment, helping teachers gauge understanding and tailor subsequent instruction.

Similarly, activities like "Think-Pair-Share", "Turn and Talk", "Penny for Your Thoughts", "Response Cards", "Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down", "Four Corners", and microteaching apply these principles to promote active engagement and critical thinking. "Think-Pair-Share" and "Turn and Talk" encourage students to articulate their thoughts and listen to others, fostering a supportive environment and enhancing communication skills. "Response Cards" and "Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down" provide immediate feedback and facilitate quick assessment, while "Four Corners" engages students in movement and decision-making, promoting active learning. Microteaching, where students teach a short lesson to peers, integrates reflection and assessment, allowing students to apply what they have learned and receive constructive feedback. By incorporating these principles, teachers can create a more effective and enriching learning experience.

Considering the above, if every teacher pays attention to the main elements of the lesson plan and delivers the lesson skillfully, it will enhance not only the quality of their lessons but also their and their students' mastery of the English language. Lesson elements cannot be mastered perfectly by a future English teacher with 5 or 6 lectures a day, who has spent only a few hours practicing hands-on techniques in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan. The ideal lesson here combines theoretical lectures with hands-on engagement, where lessons are carefully taught and students given tasks to perform in pairs or groups related to these lectures. A step further would be for schools and universities themselves to launch training programs emphasizing this hands-on dynamic, and would prove beneficial for both in-service and pre-service teachers and faculty.

By integrating theory with practice, teachers can develop a deeper understanding and proficiency in lesson planning and delivery. This comprehensive approach ensures that educators are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students, promoting effective language learning. Ultimately, such targeted training programs can significantly elevate the overall standard of English language education in Uzbekistan. The key element of lessons includes:
▪ Objectives
▪ Sequencing

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- Interaction
- Differentiation
- Assessment
- Materials
- Contingency plan
- Reflection

SETTING CLEAR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Lesson planning ensures that teachers establish specific and measurable learning objectives for their students (13). Clear objectives outline the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students are expected to acquire by the end of a lesson or unit (10). The objectives of the lesson are to be based on SMART objectives and take into consideration the Bloom's taxonomy (3) in organizing and planning lessons. The term SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic and time-bound learning and teaching, and SMART objectives can be applied across multiple dimensions of education (for instance, both learning and teaching). Logical and well-organized learning and teaching can be achieved by the following SMART framework:

Criteria	Description	For English-language learner
Specific	Target a specific area for improvement	Focus on a single language domain, or a very concrete skill
Measurable	Quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress	Ensure tools exist, such as a rubric, to measure student progress
Attainable	Be realistic and aligned with appropriate standards	Align with language development standards and proficiency levels
Relevant	English language goals matter, and are appropriate for this time and place	Is relevant to what students need to be successful in content classes and move to next level of proficiency
Time-bound	Specify when the result(s) can be achieved	Is specific to individual or groups of students

Table 1. SMART goals for English language learners, by Alison Balterr

Specific objectives refer to identifying the main ideas in a lesson and setting specific goals for students to achieve. For example, in the context of a medical university, a lesson might focus on describing symptoms of illness to a doctor in the speaking part, writing a formal letter asking for information about a scholarship for studying medicine abroad in the writing part, and listening to an academic lecture and identifying key details in medicine while lesson planning.

Measurable objectives mean that the result of teaching and learning should be evaluative, and the teacher should both give learners specific feedback and hold the learning process accountable. The work (9) emphasized the importance of setting concrete and observable objectives in teaching. She advised against using verbs like "understand" or "know" as these are not easily measurable. Instead, she suggested using actions that can be visibly assessed, such as creating a family poster and talking about it. Objectives should be framed in a way that allows teachers to evaluate whether students have achieved them through observable actions.

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Attainable means, given the resources, timeframe, background, and readiness of the students, learning objectives should be achievable. The cognitive level of the learning objectives should be appropriate to the course level and student level (e.g., a freshman-level course as compared to a graduate-level course) [4]. Attainable objectives push teachers to consider their achievement after each activity. Challengeable but manageable tasks should be planned as they continually meet the learners' needs.

Relevant objective means that the set goal should be fixed in both timeframe and relative to learners' abilities. Some objectives look great on paper, but don't transition well to real-life learning. Set goals should focus on realistic results rather than the process or activities that students are going to complete (e.g., writing a letter or taking a test). An effective learning objective will outline the expected outcome, which includes the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that students should have picked up during the teacher's observation.

Time-bound holds the teacher responsible, inspires greater teaching and learning outcomes, and, if necessary, explicitly states the timetable. This aids educators in determining the level of performance required of students in order to be deemed competent.

A hierarchical model called Bloom's taxonomy is used to categorize the above-mentioned learning objectives according to their degrees of detail and complexity. Bloom's taxonomy was created to outline and clarify how learners acquire new knowledge and skills. Though the original intention of the taxonomy was to serve as an assessment tool, Bloom's taxonomy is effective in helping instructors identify clear learning objectives as well as create purposeful learning activities and instructional materials (3). Bloom's taxonomy includes verb tables full of action verbs – such as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating – to help to design teaching objectives. It is noteworthy that Bloom's taxonomy verb table is observable and measurable. The teacher and learner know clearly the aim, content, and goal of the teaching and learning process. By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to list, recite, outline, define, name, match, quote, recall, identify, label, or recognize language material – for instance, *healthy lifestyle tips*. It is the teacher's choice to consider one or two of these action verbs in designing lesson objectives.

The *understanding* segment of the taxonomy can be seen in the performance of language skills, answering questions asked by the teacher, or reacting to impulses. By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to describe, explain, paraphrase, restate, give original examples of, summarize, contrast, interpret, or discuss the topic under discussion (e.g., *traditional health remedies*).

The apply segment of the taxonomy aims to prepare students for independent language-use stage by providing scaffolding from highly-controlled lessons to a freer practice. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to calculate, predict, apply, solve, illustrate, use, demonstrate, determine, model, perform, or present specific examples on the topic (e.g., *the existing healthcare system in the region*).

The *analyze* segment of the taxonomy is aimed at developing contrastive, critical, and comparative ideas on the differentiating sides of the topic and identifying the problems and issues with it. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to classify, break down, categorize, analyze, diagram, illustrate, criticize, simplify, associate, or differentiate

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the peculiarities of the phenomena under discussion (e.g., *Western and Central Asian countries' healthcare systems*).

The *evaluate* segment of the taxonomy is aimed at justifying, defending, supporting views, and arguing during debates, discussions, and project work to shape ideas on the topic. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to choose, support, relate, determine, defend, judge, grade, compare, contrast, argue, justify, support, convince, select, or evaluate the matter (e.g., *the factors that influence life expectancy in different countries*).

The create segment of the taxonomy is aimed at developing high-order thinking skills (HOTS) in learners, helping them become autonomous learners. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to design, formulate, build, invent, create, compose, generate, derive, modify, or develop a personal, planned approach to the existing system (e.g., *Personal healthcare insurance plans*).

The sequence of the lesson needs a gradual release of responsibility or scaffolding in language learning and teaching. The language learning process is carried out within a certain time line, and teacher control should be divided into three stages: initial-highly controlled, medium-moderately controlled, and post-free practice stages. Highly controlled activities gradually should be replaced by moderately controlled exercises and later by freer activities in which learners are allowed to communicate and use language for communication needs.

Moderately-controlled activities are information gap activities, creating comics, whole-class mingling activities, board games, and writing dialogues.

Free practice segments of the lesson are communication, talking, respecting the rules of class, signals, and habitually reacting to the rules. The activities are usually student-centered or independent, such as interviewing each other, writing or telling stories, playing conversation games, role-playing, creating advertisements, making videos, drawing something, and describing it.

Within these constraints of stages, the teacher's responsibility is released step by step, and teaching a course or subject with learner autonomy is the target point. It means that the activities are consciously and meaningfully chosen for each step, considering the age, content area, interests, learning styles, and needs of learners. Experiments with the language in realistic contexts should align with the above-mentioned lesson components. The teacher's role is mainly to establish the conditions and learning environment in which students can practice in real-life or almost-real-life contexts and will be able to use the language material in relevance. When sequencing the activities, the teacher should follow the basic rules:

1. Present new language before asking students to practice it. New language should be introduced by listening to or reading texts and checking comprehension before asking students to practice it.

2. Use receptive tasks before productive tasks. You should encourage students to use receptive tasks, like listening and reading, before you ask them to complete productive tasks, like speaking and writing.

3. Provide controlled practice before independent practice. You should provide controlled or guided practice exercises before you ask students to produce new language independently. Young learners need some practice before they can do a freer, more communicative activity.

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The teacher must also manage his or her group, making sure students are on task and reminding them to quiet down when necessary. The following are the current problems in the schools of Uzbekistan:

1. There is a one-sided approach to language teaching – for example, only grammar, only games, only translation, or only giving homework and then wasting time checking it.

2. The sequence of topics is designed to develop language skills on general topics, and a clear systematic system for ensuring the gradual improvement of these skills and evaluating them has not been developed.

3. Extra lessons and club activities in the lesson plan are not aimed at ensuring students' compliance with the international and national-level assessment systems. Instead, students are turning to private language training courses.

The problem of ELT in Uzbekistan today is that secondary school teachers cannot avoid the traditional approach of language teaching, or focus excessively on grammar. Grammar practice should be language practice: grammar is a language strategy that serves as scaffolding in the initial stage of language learning. Further language use doesn't always obey the structural rules of the target language. Communicative grammar should be focused on teaching. Grammar is taught to communicate accurately and fluently in the target language. As several examples of grammar-focused language games for students, compete in teams to complete a grammar task, or hold a debate using certain constructions (e.g., *"You may be right, but…"*, or *"Indeed, it is important to…"*).

Students are often not given the chance to engage in meaningful conversations with their teacher and peers. It is teachers' responsibility as instructors to make sure language learners have opportunities for real-world communication. Encouraging learners to apply their newly acquired English communication skills in authentic contexts is just as important as imparting them. Through lesson design, the instructor empowers students to participate actively in the classroom and take responsibility for their own education. Students will gain more knowledge through engagement in the target language, but they will also become more interested, strong, knowledgeable, collaborative, and free to express themselves.

Differentiation

Differentiated instruction can be applied if there is a particular level of difference in the learners' language level. Through diagnostic tests, students can be divided into instruction groups. Some students need to go slower, and they need scaffolding techniques to retain new language material, while others grab the new material faster. With this in mind, it is important to differentiate content, process, and product in teaching foreign languages.

"Content differentiation" refers to textbooks and other physical teaching materials. If necessary, materials can be adapted according to the students' proficiency level. If given material is too difficult, the instructor can simplify to make the lesson more accessible; if too easy, the instructor can implement activities to more strongly challenge students' grasp of the skill.

The actual process of teaching language should be appropriate to the language level of the learners. The way each class or student uses their language skills, and the interests they have in how they do so, can differ greatly from person to person. Some students prefer to address artificial intelligence (AI), while others prefer to work with a partner or in a

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small group. The teacher should consider student interaction mode in lesson planning beforehand.

Even in a single task, the product, or result, may be different among the members of the same group. For instance, the presentation material was on how to write a descriptive paragraph. Each student came up with various versions of the paragraph description. The teacher should create an independent learning atmosphere to make it easier to remember the language material and activate it in cohesion.

Assessment refers to several methods of gathering information on a learner's language skills or achievements. It is critical to test learners as part of the evaluation process to determine how far they have progressed, and how much more they should reasonably be expected to learn. Assessment is an important component of lesson planning since it connects learning outcomes, content, and learning and teaching activities. Although the terms testing and assessment are sometimes used interchangeably, the latter is an umbrella phrase – it encompasses both measurements like tests, and more qualitative techniques of monitoring students' learning such as observation, stimulation, or project work. Assessment is a component of evaluation that considers the complete language course in its feedback, not only what the particular learner has learned.

Carter and Nunan classify proficiency, achievement, formative, and summative types of assessment (2). Formative assessment is the assessment carried out by teachers during the learning process with the aim of using the result to improve instruction. It is an essential part of the lesson because it mirrors the result of the educational process.

Assessment covers a broader range of procedures than testing and includes both formal and informal measures. Formal assessment usually implies a written document, such as a test, quiz, or paper. A formal evaluation is given a numerical rating or grade based on scholar performance, whereas an informal evaluation does not contribute to a student's final grade. An informal assessment may also encompass observation, inventories, checklists, ranking scales, rubrics, performance and portfolio assessments, participation, peer and self-evaluation, and discussion. Assessment must not only evaluate a language's performance but also meet the requirements of validity, realism, and practicability. A direct assessment of language performance takes time, especially with individualized testing. Teachers should create their own assessment tasks if they have to administer the class. It is critical to provide enough support and to put in place a system to ensure the quality of the assessment methods used in the class.

Materials

Teaching materials can be categorized into three distinct types: classroom or craft materials, technology materials, and text-based materials. The first category includes handmade or craft-based items, such as posters, feel-wheel charts, weather wheels, butterflies, planes, flowers, and similar objects. The second category encompasses technology-based materials, including smartboards, tablets, smart TVs, overhead projectors, speakers, and other digital tools. The third category consists of text-based materials, which are further subdivided into three types: ready-made materials (pre-designed resources from textbooks or websites that require no modification), adapted materials (resources that can be modified to fit the lesson context), and created materials (resources developed by the teacher themselves).

When designing a lesson plan, it is crucial for the teacher to evaluate ready-made materials in relation to the lesson content. The following guiding questions can support the teacher in determining the appropriate use of these materials:

▪ Who is the target audience for these materials (e.g., level, age group, language background)?

▪ How much time is required for effective use?

▪ What level of preparation is necessary?

▪ Which skills (speaking, reading, listening, writing) will be practiced?

▪ Will these materials engage and motivate my students?

▪ What are the specific objectives of these materials?

▪ Do the materials align with my teaching context?

When adapting ready-made materials, teachers often consider various strategies such as adding, subtracting, reordering, simplifying, modifying, quantifying, adjusting modality, or enriching content with authentic materials. These adaptations can be achieved by planning additional examples, tasks, and interactions (e.g., asking the same question to different students), and incorporating pre- or post-tasks. Reordering is crucial for maintaining timelines, scaffolding learning, or adjusting activities during lesson delivery. Modifying textbook materials can transform dull exercises into more engaging tasks. For instance, a writing task that may be too simple for advanced students could be altered into a speaking task, encouraging spontaneous sentence construction and providing practice in real-world speaking skills.

Contingency plan

Contingency planning involves preparing in advance for unexpected situations that may arise during teaching. A well-thought-out contingency plan should address potential issues that could disrupt the lesson flow. For example, if the power goes out during a listening task, or if technical difficulties with Wi-Fi or internet connections prevent access to video content via platforms like YouTube, the teacher should have backup activities ready. These could include pre-recorded audio or video files, printed materials, or interactive tasks that don't rely on technology. The teacher should be able to quickly adapt and modify the lesson without losing valuable class time.

In some cases, a plan that works well with one group of students may not be effective with another. In such instances, the teacher should make necessary adjustments to tasks and language materials. These adjustments should be included in the contingency plan. The contingency plan serves as a safeguard, offering alternative approaches to help the teacher and students stay on track toward achieving the lesson's objectives. Additionally, the teacher should reflect on these changes after the lesson to refine future plans. Regularly updating the contingency plan based on classroom experiences enhances its effectiveness. By anticipating a range of scenarios, the teacher remains flexible and prepared to maintain a productive learning environment.

Reflection

Refining lessons through meaningful classroom practices and research-based strategies allows teachers to fine-tune their teaching approach in response to their specific context. Deep reflection, which is central to quality teaching practice, can become a habitual process for teachers, their departments, and schools, fostering positive change in classroom engagement and promoting meaningful learning [5]. Teachers should engage in deep reflection and inquiry, not only with their students but also with their colleagues.

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This reflective practice helps teachers organize engaging lessons that motivate students and create an interactive learning environment. By consistently reflecting on their teaching methods, educators can enhance student engagement and ensure that lessons are relevant and effective.

Being a reflective English language educator means consistently evaluating and improving one's teaching practices. Teachers should reflect on various aspects of their work, including the curriculum, syllabus, lesson plans, students' language acquisition, and the overall teaching process. Reflection involves looking back on lessons, considering what worked well and what didn't, and thinking critically about the reasons behind these outcomes. By analyzing these reflections, teachers can identify areas for improvement and determine the next steps for enhancing their teaching strategies. This ongoing process of self-evaluation and adjustment helps educators create more effective, student-centered learning experiences.

Reflection is a crucial component of a teacher's professional development. Critical reflection involves a deep evaluation of one's teaching practices and helps educators understand their impact on students. Reflection can occur in two ways: reflection-in-action, which takes place during the teaching process, and reflection-on-action, which occurs after the lesson has been completed. By reviewing their teaching experiences, teachers can identify areas for improvement and witness positive changes in their professional growth. Furthermore, reflection fosters stronger connections with colleagues and supports the development of teachers as both reflective practitioners and leaders. In essence, reflection is key to both personal and professional growth, contributing to the ongoing evolution of teaching practices.

Incorporating reflection into the daily routine of an English teacher fosters a culture of growth and continuous improvement. Reflective teachers actively seek feedback from both their students and colleagues, using this input to refine and enhance their teaching methods. By remaining curious and open to change, teachers can adjust their approach to better meet the diverse needs of their students. This ongoing reflection not only improves individual lessons but also contributes to the development of a more flexible and responsive curriculum. Additionally, it encourages collaboration among teachers, allowing them to share experiences and ideas that support each other's professional growth. This teamwork leads to more innovative teaching strategies, increasing student engagement and helping them acquire the language more effectively.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights the essential role of thorough lesson planning in English Language Teaching (ELT) to foster learner autonomy. Effective lesson planning ensures that classes are not only relevant and meaningful to students but also tailored to their individual learning needs. By integrating the 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners, teachers can establish a comprehensive framework that accommodates diverse proficiency levels and learning styles. This structured approach enables educators to design high-quality lessons that enhance student motivation and engagement through creativity and impactful projects, ultimately promoting a more dynamic and effective learning environment.

Moreover, thorough lesson preparation allows teachers to anticipate and effectively manage classroom dynamics, providing a structured yet adaptable framework for language learning. This foresight is essential for maintaining an organized and supportive

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learning environment, which is key to promoting learner autonomy. Additionally, well-planned lessons act as valuable resources for substitute teachers, ensuring they can deliver consistent and effective instruction that upholds the continuity of students' learning experiences, even in the teacher's absence.

The study also emphasizes the importance of reflective practice in refining teaching methods and strategies. By engaging in regular reflection, teachers can consistently enhance their lesson planning and delivery, leading to positive changes in classroom engagement and fostering meaningful learning. This ongoing process not only improves individual teaching practices but also supports the professional growth of educators, contributing to the development of a collaborative and reflective teaching community. Through shared reflection, teachers can exchange insights and ideas, strengthening their collective ability to support student success.

Ultimately, the research demonstrates that effective lesson planning not only fosters greater learner autonomy and engagement but also enhances classroom management. By offering a clear instructional roadmap, teachers can ensure continuity and consistency in teaching, which in turn supports the overall development and success of their students. This comprehensive approach to lesson planning, coupled with reflective practice, emphasizes the critical role of educators in shaping dynamic, responsive, and effective language learning environments that adapt to students' needs and promote long-term academic growth.

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