

ELEMENT 5

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DIFFERENTIATING A TEACHING OBJECTIVE FROM A LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Objective

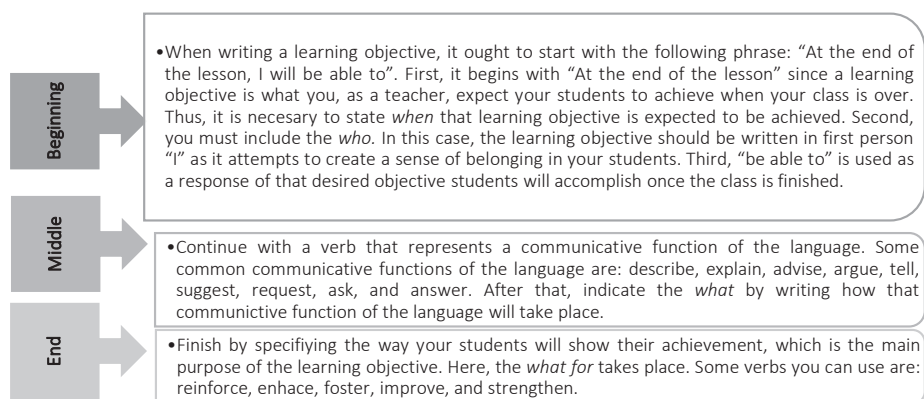
To differentiate teaching from learning objectives.

Type of Objectives

In educational settings, once you have identified students', teachers', and institutional context's needs, as well as the social factors that might influence learning, establishing an objective becomes a fundamental task. The objective provides purpose and direction toward achieving any goal. Throughout our teaching experiences, we have noticed that pre-service teachers struggle when it comes to writing an objective for their lesson plans and constructing their own materials. One of the issues is misunderstanding the differences between a teaching and learning objective. These are two distinct processes that need to be clearly understood, so that pre-service teachers successfully write a clear objective in their future academic tasks. In this manner, it is vital to define these two concepts separately to walk on solid ground and avoid confusion when referring to them in academic settings. Hence, this is our understanding of what a teaching objective and a learning objective are.

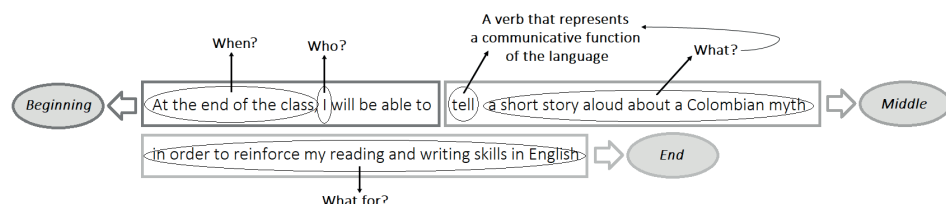
Learning Objective

On the one hand, a learning objective refers to what teachers expect students to learn. In other words, a learning objective is related to a desirable outcome that a teacher has for his or her students to accomplish in the class. When writing a learning objective, bear in mind the following structure:



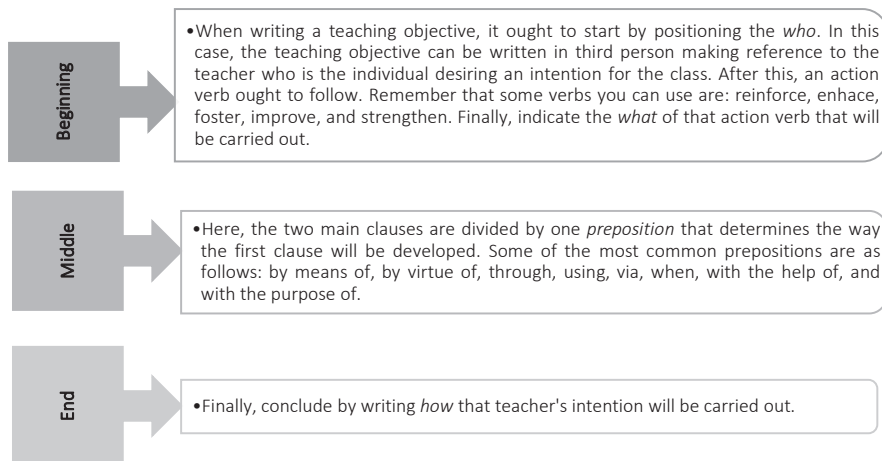
1. Look at the following example of a Learning Objective and its essential parts.

Learning Objective: At the end of the class, I will be able to tell a short story aloud about a Colombian myth in order to reinforce my pronunciation in English.



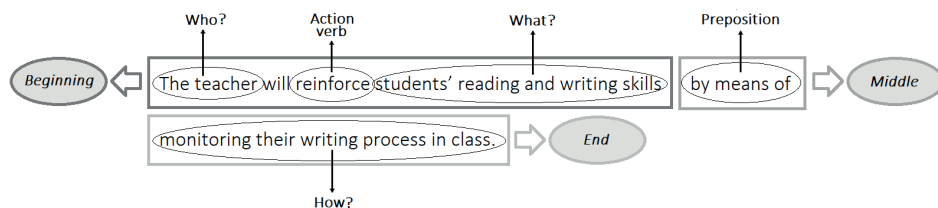
Teaching Objective

On the other hand, teaching refers to the process of constructing knowledge among individuals. Consequently, this reciprocal process of helping each other academically is mediated by teachers who contribute to their students' current and future lives. In this sense, a teaching objective is more closely related to the purpose teachers have towards their intentions regarding a class, as shown in the following structure.



2. Look at the following example of a Teaching Objective and its essential parts:

Teaching Objective: The teacher will reinforce students' reading and writing skills by means of monitoring their writing process in class.



- Please note that a teaching objective is directed toward the main intention that teachers have for their classes.
- Additionally, a teaching objective also follows the same structure as a learning objective; however, the difference is where the clauses are positioned.

3. In your own words, answer the following question: How would you define a teaching objective and a learning objective?

I think I could define a learning objective as ...

I think I could define a teaching objective as ...



4. Read the examples below. Then, find the mistakes in the following objectives and rewrite them correctly. Afterward, classify the objective into a teaching objective (TO) or a learning objective (LO) by crossing out the corresponding item in the chart. Finally, compare your answers with a classmate.

Example:

At the end of the lesson, my students could tell a short letter about what they did in their last vacation.

At the end of the lesson, I **will be able to write a short letter about what I did in my last vacation.**

(TO)

(LO)

- A. I will reinforce students' speaking skill by creating awareness about the importance of caring for the environment.

(TO)

(LO)

- B. My students will be able to understand the three different pronunciations of the ED ending through a short conversation in past tense.

(TO)

(LO)

- C. The teacher will strengthen students' speaking skill by presenting an explanatory video about ED pronunciation.

(TO)

(LO)

- D. At the end of the lesson, they will be able to debate the pros and cons of environmental problems through a mind map they will create about the importance of caring for the environment.

(TO)

(LO)

5. Write a learning objective and a teaching objective based on the following school context:

School Context	Learning Objective	Teaching Objective
•Urban High School. •Seventh graders. •Thirty-three students. •English class. •The skill students are going to practice is speaking. •The topic you are working on this week is: "My plans for my next vacation".	• _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	• _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

6. Now, think about a real school context you are familiar with and write it down in the first chart. For a moment, imagine you work at this institution, and you are about to plan your upcoming English lessons. Thus, select a main topic to work with and the language skills you want to foster. Finally, write your teaching objective and learning objective in the second and third charts, respectively.

Context	
Learning objective	
Teaching objective	

ELEMENT 6

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DISCOVERING THE HIERARCHY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES

Objective

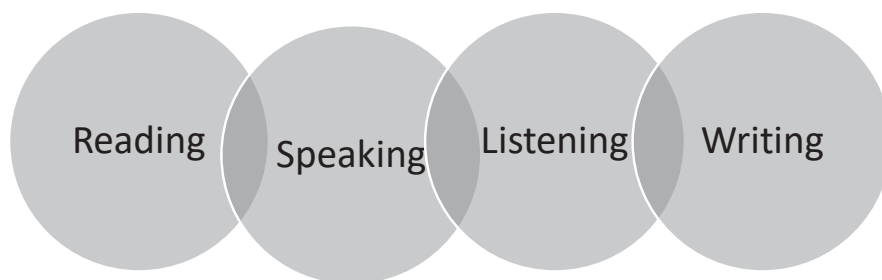
To determine the language skills to develop in the lesson.

Hierarchy of Communicative Activities

One of the starting points to design classwork material in a foreign language classroom is to think about a language skill learners are going to practice the most during the lesson. There are four language communicative skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Not only do pre-service teachers have to think about language skills when designing material for their students, but they also have to consider activities and exercises for practicing those language skills. Complementary activities or exercises meant to practice language skills and reach the lesson objective are connected to subskills like mastering vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, phonics, phonetics, etc. Often, activities such as filling in the blanks, matching, and true false exercises, support and prepare learners to activate their knowledge for the lesson.

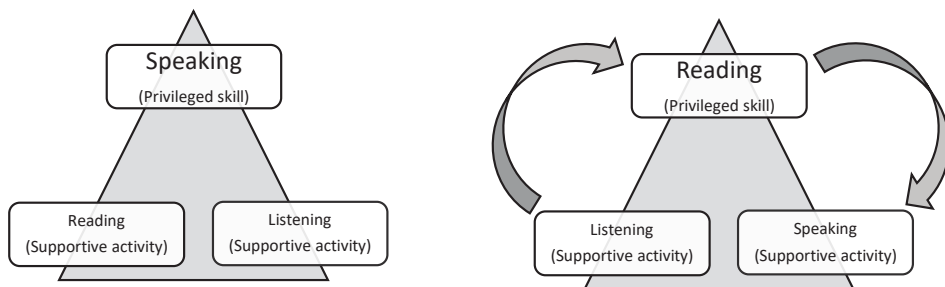
It would be great for pre-service teachers to integrate all the language skills in one lesson. This might help keep balance and provide learners the chance to learn and practice all four basic communicative language skills. It is also true that several variables can affect the classroom dynamics, which can impede practicing all the language skills. Some of these variables could be the number of students per class, the accessibility to printed material for learners, and the students' language level, motivation, or age just to mention a few.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS



One way to tackle this situation is to plan the lesson by privileging the use and practice of one language skill over the others. This means that one language skill is going to be the protagonist, and the other language skills are there to be supporters. For example, if the main goal in a lesson is to promote learners' speaking production, the classroom material could also provide activities for vocabulary, reading, and so on. One way to start a lesson with speaking as the privileged language skill would be by incorporating activities related to vocabulary and pronunciation. Then, you can follow up with a short reading to help learners talk about and express their opinions. In this way, the classroom material paves the way for learners to reach the speaking objective.

HIERARCHY OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS IN A LESSON



At the top part of the left triangle, we can see that speaking is the privileged skill for the lesson. Reading and listening act as supportive language skills to practice speaking. As speaking is the language skill at the top, this creates a hierarchy. In this case, reading and listening skills act as supportive language skills to promote speaking production, instead. A pre-service teacher can use the same three language skill elements and change the objective of the lesson to prioritize reading, for instance. Then, the hierarchy would change. Reading would be at the top, while speaking and listening would support the lesson to accomplish the objective (see the right triangle). By rotating the protagonist skill in each lesson or classwork material, you can find a balance among the four language skills. This rotation creates a dynamic classroom and breaks away from monotony.

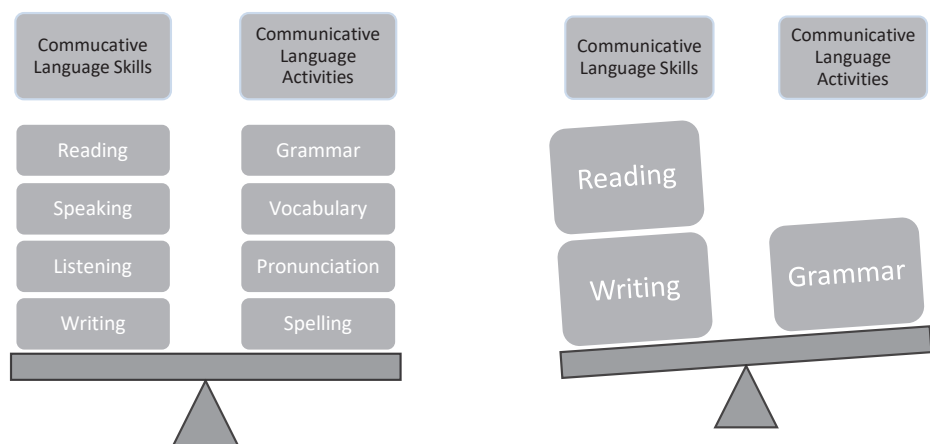
1. Classify the following words in the chart.

Writing- word puzzle -listening-
vocabulary- cross word-fill in the gaps-
scanning -matching-speaking-wh
questions-reading-pronunciation-true
false-skimming-listening for gists

Language Skill	SubSkill	Activity or Exercise
•Speaking	•Pronunciation	•Fill in the gap

Balancing Communicative Language Activities

Toro et al. (2019) mentioned that human beings need to communicate, which is why teachers are called upon to develop effective and engaging communicative activities in the classroom. Besides the four communicative language skills (speaking, reading, writing, and listening), teachers may also want their students to master other elements of the foreign language, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. These elements fall outside of the communicative category of skills, but they are fundamental in establishing the four communicative language skills. For example, understanding vocabulary about a specific topic can help students express and/or comprehend ideas correctly. Also, appropriate grammar knowledge maximizes the accurateness of language use. Proper pronunciation and intonation minimize the chances of misunderstanding. Pre-service teachers should consider the type of exercises when developing classroom activities. Each exercise or activity should focus on supporting the protagonist skill with other elements for any given lesson.



The more communicative language skills you can include in a lesson, the better the lesson for your students to reach their objectives. Variety in communicative language skills creates a balance in your lessons, such as the figure on the left above. On the contrary, if the lesson only favors a few language skills with only one activity, it will be disproportionate as shown in the figure on the right above.

2. The following diagram contains all four language skills and some language activities. Look at the diagram and think about a lesson you would like to plan.

2.1 First, select one language skill to be the protagonist of your lesson. Second, select the supportive language skills and/or activities for the lesson. Third, write the information in the triangle to visualize the hierarchy and balance you provide for the lesson.



3. Talk to a classmate and exchange information about the lesson you are planning. Discuss how you created balance with the language skills and activities you selected.

4. Answer the following questions based on the information you filled out in exercise 3.

Which language skill is the protagonist of your lesson?

?

What is the main objective for your lesson?

?

5. Use the following lines to write about the way you understand keeping balance with communicative language skills and activities when designing material.

