

ELEMENT 7

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LESSON PLANNING AND ITS CONNECTION TO MATERIAL DESIGN

Objective

To relate the steps in a lesson plan to materials design.

Lesson Planning and Materials Design

Materials are much more than simple tools that a teacher uses in class without a purpose. That is why they need to be analyzed from a critical point of view. When designing materials, it is vital to go through a planning process linked to the way you will present your lesson.

Most teachers go through a phase, either consciously or subconsciously, before planning what to develop in class. This is called the pre-planning phase, in which teachers think of the following: ideas for individual or group exercises; activities that they have seen, heard about, or applied before; and materials for a possible starting point. Once teachers have a clearer perspective in what their lesson will be like, they may write everything down. This writing process is detailed, especially because written lesson plans are a helpful way of keeping track of what we intend to achieve in a period of time.

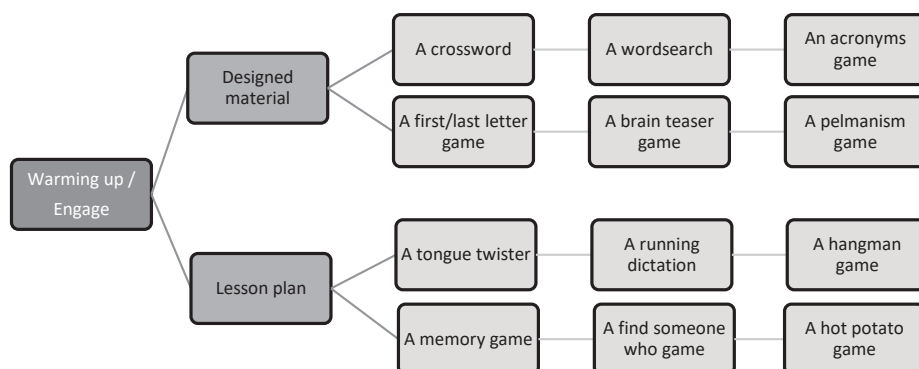
Furthermore, lesson plans are a response to an organized and detailed writing process. We can expect that anyone who looks at a lesson plan will be able to understand the steps written down. Consequently, lesson planning provides “the observer clear evidence of the thinking that has gone into the making of the lesson” (Harmer, 2007, p. 365). Moreover, novice pre-service teachers can feel confident in knowing what to do in the classroom progressively. Nonetheless, we need to consider that “planning a lesson is not the same as scripting a lesson” (Harmer, 2007, p. 365). Lessons cannot be thought of as scripts where the cast (teacher and students) must remember and reproduce words exactly the way they were written. Having a written lesson plan means that we are in constant dialogue between what we intend to achieve (what has already been written) and what will actually happen during the class.

Based on our experience as material developers, we have come to realize that it is possible to link lesson planning to material design. EFL materials are conceived as “sociocultural, pedagogical, didactic, and cognitive mediations that facilitate linguistic and cultural interactions” (Núñez-Pardo, 2020a, p.114) as they represent “mediations in sociocultural interactions among learners from diverse cultural worlds” (Núñez-Pardo, 2020b, p.18). Therefore, they take the form of learning exercises or activities, tasks, lessons, worksheets, didactic units, modules, workshops, or books (Núñez et al., 2009; Núñez & Téllez, 2015; Núñez & Téllez, 2009) that have gone through a well thought out process as the chart below shows.

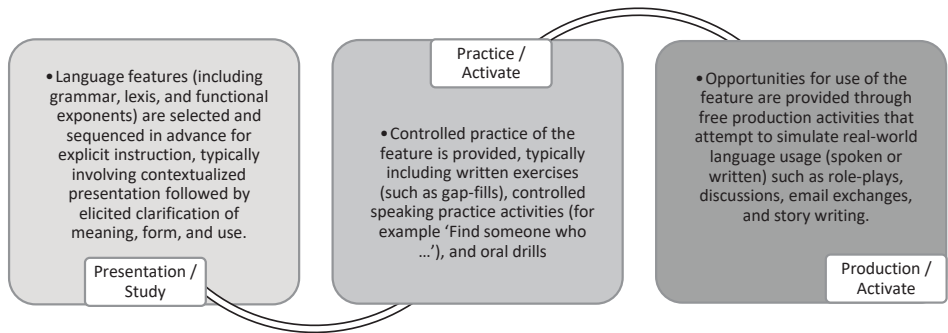
	Printed materials:	Visual materials:	Realia:
Materials	Worksheets, workshops, workbooks, modules, lessons, units, short stories, chants, etc.	Posters, flashcards, photographs, pictures, drawings, artwork, PowerPoint slides, picture dictionaries, flyers, booklets, brochures, etc.	Objects that are not specifically designed for learning but used in teaching processes to support performance in class, such as: hats, glasses, toys, balls, bags, etc.

For us, a written workshop should represent a well-planned lesson. In fact, as Harmer (2007) states “most teaching sequences need to help certain characteristics or elements” (p.51). The author further states that these elements are Engage, Study, and Activate. Therefore, we invite you to produce your own material, which indirectly suits your lesson plan. When designing your workshops, we also recommend following the PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) model coined by Donn Byrne in 1976. The PPP model has been used to structure ELT lessons, and it has been remarkably durable. Furthermore, the PPP model is well known for its use in pre-service teacher education programmes worldwide (Anderson, 2016, p.218), and it has been popular for over 40 years after it first emerged (Harris, 2015). Another possibility is the one suggested by Harmer (2007) ESA (Engage-Study-Activate). We also acknowledge they are not the only ways to plan a lesson, but whatever the process selected it ought to follow connected steps.

In addition to creating your own material and using the PPP model, it is necessary to start your workshop with a warming up activity that motivates and activates your students’ learning. The warming up activity occurs at the beginning of class, and the teacher encourages and guides students to switch their thoughts to prepare for learning. A warming up activity should wake up students and catch their attention. The purpose of this enriching activity is to focus students’ attention keeping in mind that they were in a different situation before walking into the classroom. With this in mind, here are some warming up activities that might help you in starting your future lessons.



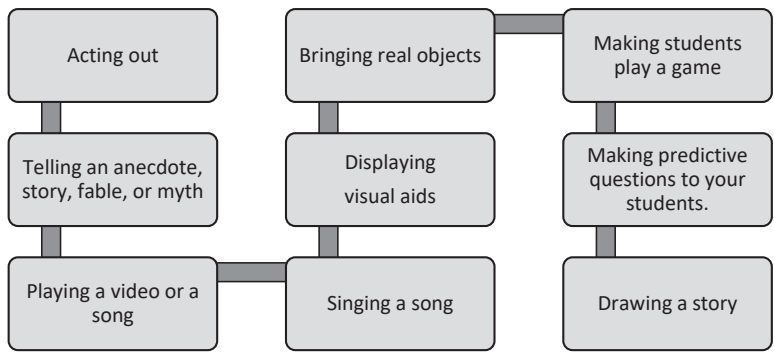
Byrne (1976, 1986) introduced the PPP model through stages, and Anderson (2016) envisaged them as follows:



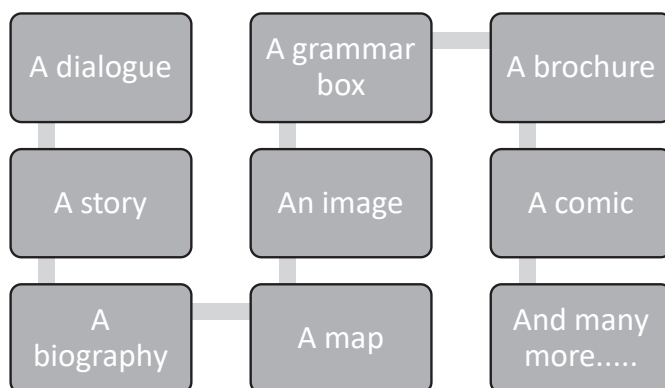
First stage: Presentation / Study

This first stage has to do with introducing content. Here, the goal is to present and explain a topic, which could be a structure of the language. Apart from being detailed and descriptive, the presentation stage together, along with the following two stages, should be written narratively for someone else to read it. Thereby, the three stages should be narrated in a way that a third person could easily understand the flow of your lesson.

We recommend that you find a way that makes you feel comfortable and helps your students discover the topic by themselves. In this sense, you can persuade students to look for knowledge that they can navigate with your help. Bear in mind that this presentation stage does not refer to a single activity. You can provide the ones you need until you reach your goal for this first stage. Hence, here are some resources you can follow to introduce your lesson:



It is noteworthy that when we design material like a workshop, resources go in the background. They are actions performed in class, and they are not written in the lesson plan. However, they are an essential aspect of our teaching practice and should be included in our planning process. Below, we will find more activities to give you an idea on how to design your workshop.



To sum up, the goal for this first stage is to make sure students understand the content by giving them opportunities to wonder and discover what you will teach them. Our final advice is to start this first stage with the same energy you began your lesson through the warming up. Then, maintain the same flow throughout the stages while engaging your students to learn.

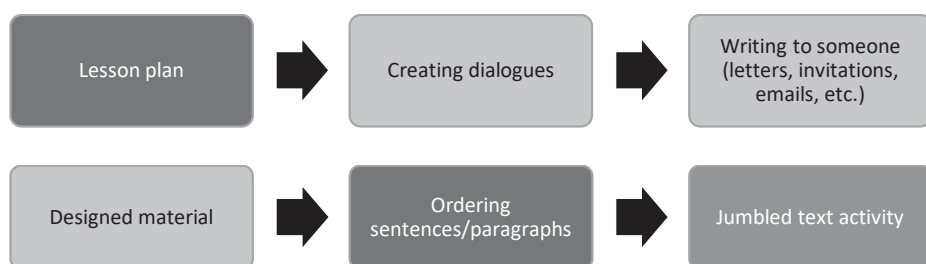
Second stage: Practice / Activate

The second stage is divided into three different spaces for practicing the language: guided practice, controlled practice, and free practice, which are all explained as follows.

Guided Practice:

According to Sharratt (2013), guided practice is a “transition practice that... allows teachers to pull back and the learners to step forward” (p.145). In other words, students have the possibility to have more control over their learning, while the teacher slowly steps back. Pearson and Gallagher (1983) mentioned that this guided practice is where the teacher gradually

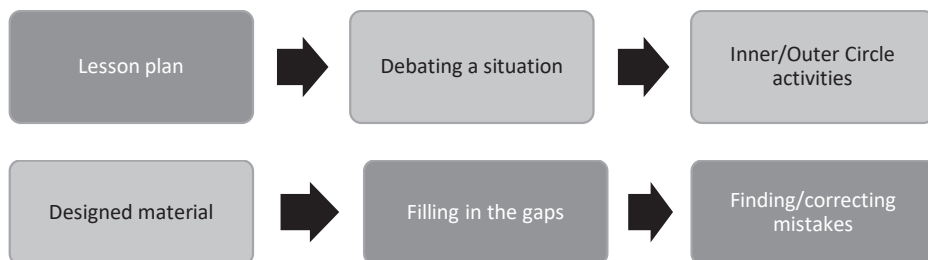
assigns task responsibilities for students. That is why, during this first space, your goal is to empower your students to practice the four language skills on their own for the first time. Here, you need to provide feedback as activities are completed. Meanwhile, you can also assess your students' progress and provide help for those who need guidance. In other words, the guided practice is the “*we do*” part of the lesson, where some autonomy is given to students in order to actively participate. They will have both your support, as the teacher, and their classmates' help when completing the task. Here are some activities that might help you when designing your guided practice space.



Controlled Practice:

Controlled practice is the second space of the practice stage in a lesson where learners are able to practice the language in a regulated manner. Here, your goal is to help learners strengthen their target language knowledge through exercises that re-enforce a specific language point. Controlled practice determines and helps you as a teacher identify the flow and understanding of your learners. The controlled practice is the “*you do*” part of the lesson, where you move from some given autonomy (guided practice) to assigned work they can develop on their own. As the teacher, you can move around the classroom and check on your students' progress. Lastly, feedback is fundamental in this space, so make sure you monitor your students closely and take time to give feedback immediately if you

see they are going down the wrong path. For ideas, we have included some activities below to help you design your controlled practice space.

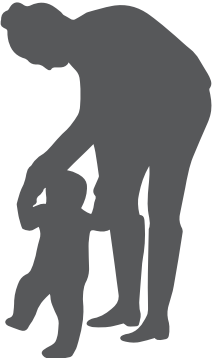


Free practice:

Finally, free practice is then used to describe closing activities that allow students to practice a specific language point in an unrestricted form. This usually happens after going through the previous spaces (guided practice, and controlled practice) since this last space gives students wings to fly in their language practice. Free practice activities are indispensable as they let students experiment with the language freely. Learners are given the chance to use the target language and their existing language knowledge without any restriction. In other words, the free practice is the “*I do*” part of the lesson where students are free to work independently by practicing existing knowledge in their own way. Thus, here are some activities that might help you when designing your free practice space.



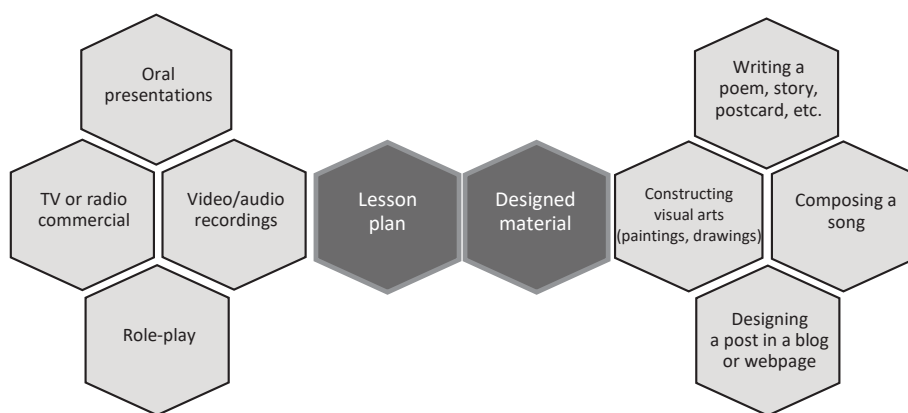
Bearing in mind that these three spaces of practice might cause confusion, we have come up with the following analogy presented in the chart below.

Guided practice	Controlled practice	Free practice
		
<i>"We do"</i>	<i>"You do"</i>	<i>"I do"</i>
Let us imagine a child learning to walk. In the first phase, the child is being guided by someone. This process is usually carried out when someone holds the child's hands and simulates him or her to walk (guided practice). Then, the child learns how to give his or her first steps but may stumble several times. So, someone places the child in a baby walker to help the child walk. However, the area where the child walks is limited since he or she needs to continue practicing with parental supervision (controlled practice). Finally, the child grows up, now parents consider that the child is ready to walk on his or her own. After preparing for a long time, parents can let their child explore the environment freely and safely (free practice).		

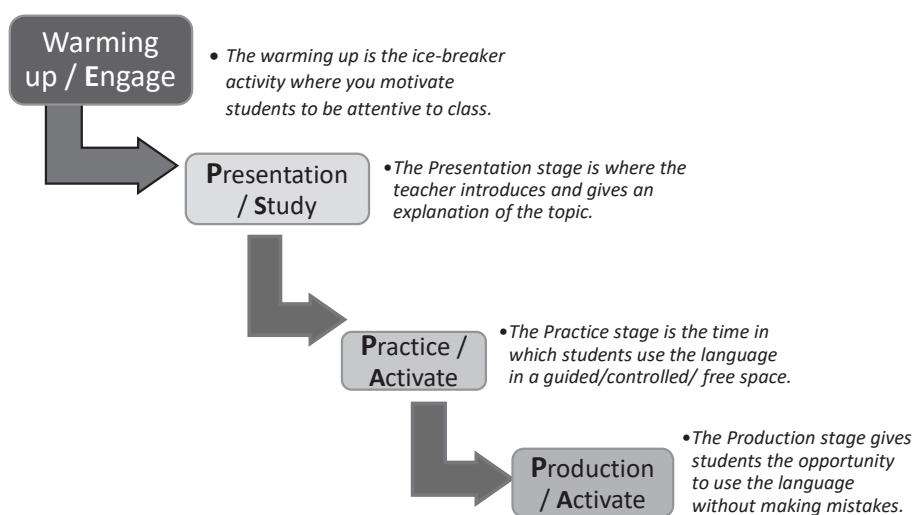
Third stage: Production / Activate

The third stage focuses on providing students with opportunities to use their own ideas in context. In this stage, students should have completely mastered the language objective and have learned how to produce it without many mistakes. Therefore, students start to produce language more freely since they have already gone through a practical process and learned how to use that target language correctly. Hence, this final stage has to do with performing things naturally. Here, students are expected to

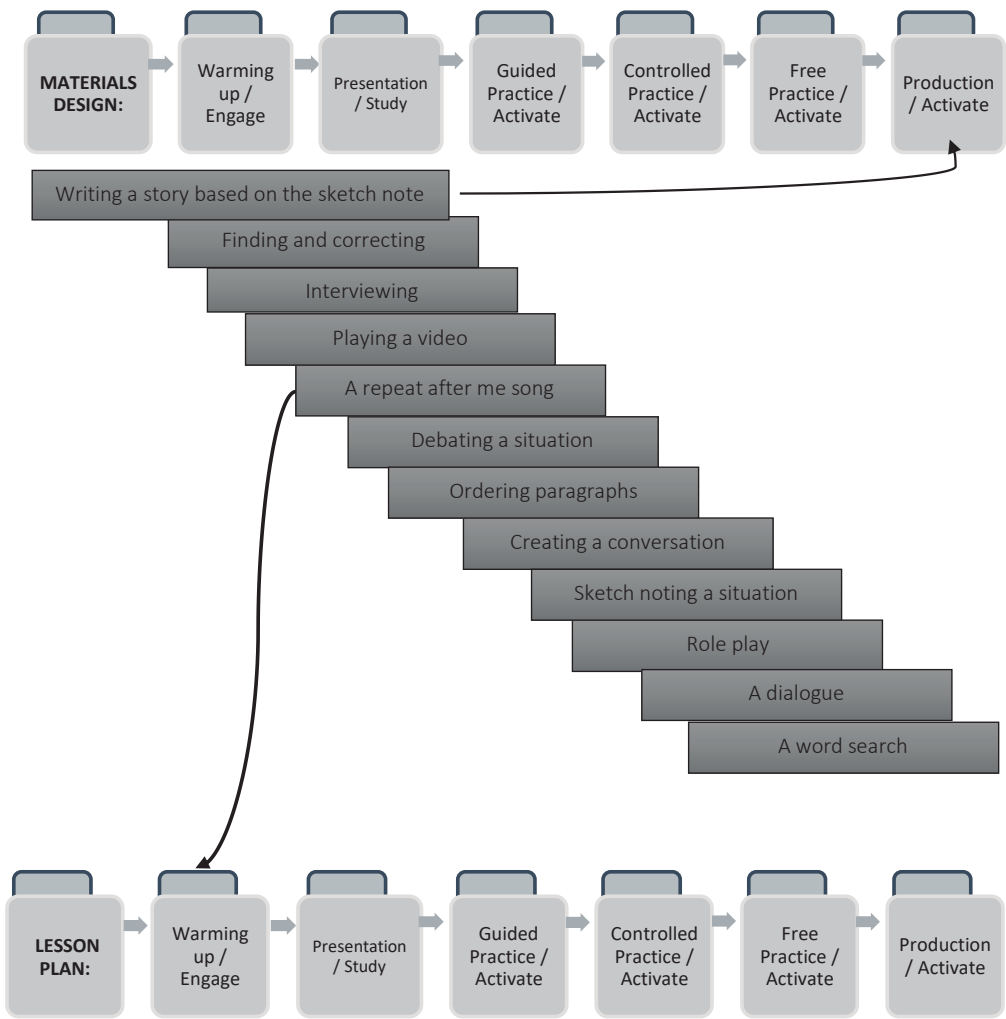
move flexibly without forcing output. As the teacher, you are not expected to intervene because students should not be intimidated by the task or making mistakes. Nonetheless, if mistakes are made, you can point them out once your students have completed the task. Otherwise, you will be stuck in the second stage (practice) and the production stage will be out of context. Consequently, this production stage can be developed in an oral and/or written way as shown in the following figure.



To summarize the PPP model and the ESA model, we have created the following figure to help you plan your future workshops, including the warming up activity as the starting point.



1. In the following chart, you will find activities for designing materials and a lesson plan. Now that you have learned how to link these two processes, draw a line to connect the activities you will select for materials design on the top and for a lesson plan on the bottom. Follow the example and remember answers may vary.



2. Compare your answers with a classmate and talk about the reason why you selected your options.