

Lesson Planning

IN ORDER TO improve your learners' four skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking, and to meet their learning objectives, you should present the material in a structured, pre-determined fashion. This is commonly known as a "lesson plan." A well-structured lesson plan will help your learners to build on their previous learning to achieve the goals that they have set at the beginning of the learning process.

There are many different lesson-planning formats available, but a majority of them follow the basic five-part structure of *warm-up*, *presentation*, *practice*, *evaluation*, and *extension*, with some variation. Here are the definitions of the various stages (Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Centers, 1998):

Warm-up: Reviews the material and helps to connect the new material to the learner's previous knowledge.

Presentation: Presents the new material in some form.

Practice: Allows the learners to practice the new material in a structured setting.

Evaluation: Assess the learners to see if they have properly learned the new material.

Extension: Allows the learners to use the new material in a less-structured format, often relating it to their own lives.

Of course, this rough, five-part format is flexible. For example, the lesson might call for several different practice activities before the evaluation. Or, if during the evaluation activity, it becomes obvious that the learners haven't understood the material, it may be necessary to go back and present it in another way. There are also some variations on this format. The EL/Civics Online Lesson Planning Tutorial divides the first stage into "Purpose" and "Engagement", where engagement draws parallels with the lesson topic and the learners' own life experiences (Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2006). The REEP Adult ESL Curriculum includes a "Reflection" stage at the end of the lesson (Arlington Education and Employment Program, 2003), etc. *The ESL Starter Kit* (Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Centers, 1998) gives a variety of lesson planning formats in addition to the five-stage system above.

Another factor to take into account in lesson planning is the degree of choice that learners have in how they respond to the activity. All activities fall into a range between guided and free activities. On the guided end of the spectrum, the learners have few choices in how they respond, and there is often

a definite right and wrong answer (as in a drill). On the free end of the spectrum, the learners might have a nearly infinite choice of how to respond (as in a role-play activity). Generally, as you move through the course of the lesson, the activities should move from the guided to the free end of the spectrum.

Whatever format you follow, whether it is the above one or some other, and however much detail you provide, it is important to have some kind of structure in which to present your material. The plan should be made with the student's objectives in mind, and with the aim of helping your students to achieve these objectives. This is key to helping your students to have a valuable learning experience.

FURTHER READING

Online

U.S. Department of Education/Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) & the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services/Office of Citizenship (USCIS). *EL/Civics Online: Lesson Planning Tutorial*. Retrieved 04/2008 from <http://www.elcivicsonline.org/course/history/31>

Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2006). *The Adult Learner- Module 4: Instructional Techniques*. Available from: <http://www.c-pal.net/course/module4>

Arlington Education and Employment Program (2003). *REEP Adult ESL Curriculum*. Available from: <http://www.apsva.us/15401081182015517/lib/15401081182015517/leepcurriculum/lessonplanindex.html>

Print

Celce-Murcia, M. ed. (1991). *Teaching English as a Second of Foreign Language, 2nd ed.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Hubbard, P. et. Al. (1983). *A Training Course for TEFL*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laubach Literacy Action (1996). *Teaching Adults: An ESL Resource Book*. Syracuse, NY: New Reader's Press.

Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Centers. (1998). *The ESL Starter Kit*. Richmond: Virginia Commonwealth University. An electronic version of this document can be downloaded from: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED431339>

For several examples of lesson planning forms, see **Appendix B, pg. 24**