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THE IMPORTANCE OF LESSON PREPARATION FOR EFL TEACHERS

Abstract: This article highlights the importance of lesson preparation for young EFL school teachers. In order to more investigate the issue, a summary of some previous research done in this regard is mentioned, as well as, the new results of currently organized interview in terms of EFL teachers' preparation are presented, and compared with previous ones..

Key words: Lesson plan, EFL teaching, textbooks, internal reason, external reason, lesson objective, activities.

Introduction

Even when educators use a textbook which includes pre-planned lessons, additional planning is typically required to tailor the textbook to the specific teaching environment and to enhance it based on the students' background, interests, learning style, and capabilities. Teachers often prefer to select tasks and activities that target the language skills emphasized in the lesson. Their plans might also incorporate strategies for tracking their students' progress and comprehension. Richards (2005) states that lesson plans are organized records of a teacher's ideas about what will be taught during a lesson. They assist teachers in premeditating the lesson to address potential issues and establish a framework for the lesson. According to McCutcheon (1980), teachers engage in planning for "internal reasons" such as enhancing their confidence, improving their understanding of the subject, ensuring smoother lesson execution, and preempting potential issues. The "external reason" for lesson planning is to meet the expectations of principals or supervisors. Lesson planning is particularly crucial for pre-service teachers as it allows them to establish control before initiating the lesson.

Literature review

The importance of a lesson plan in educational activities cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in both teaching and learning processes (Suciati, 2020; Harmer, 2007). According to Lika (2017), lesson plan is a teacher's detailed guide that outlines what students need to learn, how it will be taught, and how learning will be measured. It takes into account various factors such as students' learning styles, prior knowledge, types of intelligence, and interests. Lesson planning is a critical skill for educators worldwide, particularly for those teaching a second language. It serves as a roadmap during the lesson and helps identify what needs to be adjusted for future sessions. This paper discusses the impact of planning on the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of learning in English as EFL classrooms.

Harmer (2000) claims that planning is often viewed as a crucial element in teaching. During this phase, teachers decide on objectives, activities, resources, timing, student grouping, and other aspects of the lesson. The process of planning and executing these plans can be intricate and intellectually challenging, especially for trainee teachers preparing to teach English. Many educators struggle to create a comprehensive lesson plan and maintain consistency between goals, practical actions, and assessments during the planning and implementation of a lesson. To address these issues, Pang (2016) proposed a model that includes trainees' intentional metacognitive

organization of a lesson during both the planning and review stages. The teaching and learning of foreign languages is a significant issue in today’s global context. Liyanage & Bartlett (2010) argue that language education has been overly simplified to mastering language structures, neglecting the myriad opportunities it offers for engaging students in discussions and analyses of issues, impacting their daily lives.

In relation to the educational activities organized by the teacher, it’s evident that the teacher systematically executes the learning activities. These activities begin with a pre-activity, followed by the main activity, and conclude with a post-activity. The teacher ensures that the lesson plan includes a diverse range of activities (Latifa, 2017; Raynesa Noor Emiliyasi, 2019). A significant amount of time is spent by many teachers on planning classroom activities (Agustuna et al., 2019; Aina & Tuti, 2020), indicating that aligning activities with objectives is a challenging task. The effectiveness of the lesson plan is tied to the learning activities, which need to avoid ineffective implementations (Artacho et al., 2020; Oktafianti, 2019). Therefore, the learning activities designed by the teacher are deemed to fulfill the learning objectives and targeted learning outcomes.

Challenges arise when teachers attempt to organize learning activities based on the learning materials. Success in this endeavor is contingent upon the teacher’s ability to accommodate the students’ needs through the activities they facilitate in the classroom. Previous studies have shown that many teachers spend a considerable amount of time planning classroom activities, indicating that aligning these activities with the materials is not a straightforward task (Mauliate et al., 2019; Maulani, 2019; Sesorina, 2014). Teachers also need to consider how the pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity aspects are implemented in online learning (Evriana, 2020; Fitriyanti, 2019). The materials used in lesson planning should align with the goals and objectives, be suitable for the students’ level and needs, and be appropriate for the students’ characteristics.

Methodology

For those explanations above, the prior study explained that several lesson preparation is very crucial in order to make a proper valid lesson in teaching EFL school students. Lesson plan is a visual form of teachers’ ideas. Although there is a textbook to organize the lesson, frequently, teachers should make activities according to their students’ interests and levels. The aim of this research is to explore how young EFL teachers prepare for their lessons, how much time they spend, as well as what they rely on while making lesson plans.

N	Teachers’ full names	Teachers’ workplaces	Grades they teach	Teachers’ degrees	Work experience
1	S.M	29 th school, District Fergana	2 nd , 11 th	C1 (IELTS) (Advanced)	2 years
2	A.O’	29 th school, District Fergana	2 nd , 11 th	C1 (IELTS) (Advanced)	2 years
3	X.M	16 th school, District Fergana	7 th	C1 (IELTS) (Advanced)	2 years
4	M.A	3 rd Special school, District Altaryk	6 th	C1 (IELTS) (Advanced)	1 year

5	M.E	5 th school, City Fergana	1 st , 7 th , 11 th	C1 (IELTS) (Advanced)	1 year
6	D.I	15 th school, District Tashlak	5 th , 6 th	C1 (IELTS) (Advanced)	2 years
7	Z.A	9 th school, District Fergana	1 st , 2 nd	C1 (IELTS)	1 year

Research method: interview. One technique in qualitative research for gathering primary data is the interview. It entails finding out what one or more people think about a business, a product, or a subject. Researchers can get comprehensive data with this strategy that may not be possible with other research techniques. While quantitative research employs numerical data and statistical analysis to explain and measure phenomena, qualitative research uses observation and interviews to explore and comprehend people's experiences and perspectives. Many study domains, such as the social sciences, psychology, health sciences, business, and education, can benefit from the use of interviews. Research findings, theoretical development, and policy suggestions can be informed by patterns, themes, and trends found in the transcription, coding, and analysis of interview data.

When: 8th and 9th of February

Where: at Fergana State University

How: face to face

Data collecting tool: interview

Interview questions:

1. How long before a specific lesson do you prepare it?
2. Do you write down lesson notes to guide you? Or do you rely on a lesson format provided by another teacher, the course book, or a Teacher's Book? If so, are these notes brief (a single page or less) or long (more than one page)?
3. What do they consist of? Do you note down your objectives? Do you actually look at your notes during the lesson? If so, rarely? Occasionally? Frequently?
4. What do you do with your lesson notes after the lesson?

Data analysis and discussion

The result of the interview organized among young school EFL teachers is below:

For the first question, five of the teachers answered that they prepare for their lesson a day before the lesson, and it takes them, generally, at least 30-40 minutes to one hour and more than one hour. Two teachers said that they begin preparation two days before their lessons.

According to the answers of the second question, six of the interviewed teachers take some notes to guide them in the lesson, but five of them make this guidance based on their students' level and

interests, as well as the aim of the Course Book, instead of just following other colleagues' notes. They add some grammatical or vocabulary points to the lesson, or narrow the theme based on their observations on their students' strength and weakness in the classes. A teacher uses Teacher's Book to make a guidance. Another teacher rarely takes notes. However, almost all the notes taken by the teachers are brief, consisting of a page, while only a teacher makes broad notes that take more than just a page.

As for the coverage of the notes of the interviewed teachers, lesson topics, stages, aims, grammatical explanations (if it is intended in the lesson), and aimed vocabulary (if specific vocabulary is intended) are written down in five teachers' notes. One of them shows also time management. Another teacher notes only intended activities. Furthermore, all the teachers write down the lesson objectives. One of the teachers use their notes frequently, three of them look at their notes occasionally, two of them rarely pay attention to their guidance during the lesson.

Relying on the teachers' answers to the fourth question, three teachers collect their notes carefully after the lesson, because they use them to prepare upcoming lessons. The other three teachers also keep the notes, but not carefully, some of their notes are lost. A teacher throws the notes away after the lesson.

Conclusion

The aim of the research was to portray how essential to make a lesson plan in order to organize a lesson efficiently. Some young EFL school teachers were interviewed if they make specific plans for their lesson. If they do, how much time they spend, what features are included, what they rely on (Course Book, Teachers Book, other teachers' plans or their own preferences and students' comprehensive condition) in planning a lesson. Furthermore, the teachers were asked how many times they look at their notes, and what they do with their notes after the lesson. It is noticeable that all the interviewed teachers claimed that they dedicate enough time and effort to be ready for their lessons.

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