

# Planning Lessons and Courses

*Designing sequences of work  
for the language classroom*

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*To Pat and Robin, all their offspring and to  
Grandma Lil*

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# Map of the book

A = Activity

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## Introduction 1

What do I mean by planning?  
What do I mean by a 'good' lesson or course?  
What are teachers' concerns about lesson and course planning?  
*A beginner teacher's concern: 'Planning takes too long'*

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## 1 Who are the students? 16

1.1 Introduction  
1.2 Who can you find out from?  
The institution  
*Students from a different institution*  
*Students from inside or outside your own institution*  
Past and present teachers  
Other stakeholders  
1.3 What you can know and why  
The students  
1.4 How to get information before meeting the class  
Letter writing A  
1.5 How to get information on first meeting  
First lesson sequences  
Name learning  
Labels A

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## 2 How long is the lesson? 47

2.1 Introduction  
2.2 Beginnings  
*Beginning before the beginning*  
*Clear boundaries*  
*Fluid boundaries*  
*Working starts*  
*Taking care of the atmosphere*  
*Student starts*  
*Discussing the menu*

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*An experienced teacher's concern: 'It's getting boring'*

**Ways of getting better at planning**

*The first way: Considering our past learning experiences*

*The second way: Using coursebooks*

*The third way: Learning as we teach*

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**Using 'Chunks'**

What are 'Chunks'?

*When are chunks good or bad?*

**Beliefs, perceptions and assumptions**

The four-column analysis    **A**

**The organisation of this book**

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Register mnemonics    **A**

Settled places    **A**

Testing yourself    **A**

Building a sense of community

Drawing yourself    **A**

Group profile    **A**

Student expectations

Why are we here?    **A**

Unfinished sentences    **A**

The graph    **A**

Bartering    **A**

'What we are used to' sentences    **A**

Level

How much can they understand?    **A**

One thing I know about English    **A**

Class dictionary    **A**

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**1.6 How to get information during subsequent lessons**

Name review – Chair swap    **A**

50-second talks    **A**

Learner style    **A**

Teacher style    **A**

*Probing thinking to see what students understand*

Learning contracts    **A**

Tutorials    **A**

*Other ideas*

**1.7 How to get information after the students have gone**

Tracer study    **A**

**1.8 Conclusion**

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**2.3 Middles**

Threads

An animal a day    **A**

Stimulus-based blocks

*Meeting the stimulus*

*Analysis*

*Personalisation*

*Alteration and transfer*

*Creation*

Generalisable procedures for texts

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**2.4 Break time**

Rounding off    **A**

Complete break in class    **A**

Complete break outside class    **A**

**2.5 Ends**

Homework    **A**

Dialogue journals    **A**

What have we done today and why?    **A**

Plans for next time    **A**

Filling up the last remaining moments    **A**

**2.6 Conclusion**

**3 What can go into a lesson? 73**

**3.1 Introduction**

What there is to teach and learn

**3.2 Classes and people**

**3.3 Language patterns**

Individual words

*Learning about words*

Groups of words

Grammatical patterns

Functions

Practical principles for teaching words,  
word groups, grammatical patterns and  
functions

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**4 How do people learn and so how  
can we teach? 110**

**4.1 Introduction**

Ways of learning and teaching

**4.2 Finding out for yourself**

What it is and how it works

How it works in the language class

Finding out for yourself: Functional  
expressions     **A**

Finding out for yourself: Discourse structure  
and lexical phrases     **A**

**4.3 Things made plain**

What it is and how it works

How it works in the language class

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**5 What can we teach with? 131**

**5.1 Introduction**

Part 1

**5.2 What materials and equipment are  
available and where?**

**5.3 The dictionary**

Main types of dictionary

Uses of dictionaries

Use dictionaries yourself     **A**

Looking up words you know     **A**

**5.4 The board**

Main types of board

Uses of boards

Group landscape     **A**

Mapping the lesson     **A**

**5.5 The box of rods**

Main types of rods

Uses of rods

Marking phonological features     **A**

Story telling     **A**

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<i>Stage 1: Exposure to language</i>	Situations
<i>Stage 2: Noticing</i>	Topics and themes
<i>Stage 3: Remembering (or mental storage)</i>	Practical principles for teaching situations, topics and themes
<i>Stage 4: Use and refinement</i>	
<b>3.4 Language skills</b>	<b>3.6 Literature</b>
Listening	Practical principles for teaching literature
Speaking	<b>3.7 Culture</b>
Reading	Practical principles for working with culture
Writing	<b>3.8 Study skills</b>
Practical principles for working on skills and sub-skills	Practical principles for teaching study skills
<b>3.5 Combinations</b>	<b>3.9 Other subjects</b>
	<b>3.10 Conclusion</b>

Things made plain: Functional expressions <b>A</b>	How it works in the language class
Things made plain: Sentence structure <b>A</b>	Use and refinement: Functional expressions <b>A</b>
<b>4.4 Periphery learning</b>	Use and refinement: The listening skill <b>A</b>
What it is and how it works	<b>4.6 Taking stock</b>
How it works in the language class	Commonly found instructional sequences
Periphery learning: Functional expressions <b>A</b>	<b>4.7 Test, teach, test</b>
Periphery learning: Study skills <b>A</b>	<b>4.8 Pre-, in-, post- stages for receptive skills</b>
Periphery learning: Grammatical patterns <b>A</b>	<b>4.9 PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production)</b>
<b>4.5 Use and refinement</b>	<b>4.10 TBL (Task-based Learning)</b>
What it is and how it works	<b>4.11 Conclusion</b>

<b>5.6 The picture pack</b>	<b>Part 2</b>
Main types of picture pack	<b>5.9 A central tool: The coursebook</b>
Uses of picture packs	Advantages of using a coursebook
It reminds me of ... <b>A</b>	Disadvantages of using a coursebook
Standardising practice <b>A</b>	<b>5.10 Using the whole coursebook: The stimulus-based approach</b>
<b>5.7 The music tape</b>	Meeting the coursebook
Main types of music tape	Me Teacher, You Book <b>A</b>
Uses of music tapes	Sharing your reasoning <b>A</b>
Mental images <b>A</b>	Students survey the book in class <b>A</b>
<b>5.8 How to look after your tools:</b>	Students write bibliography cards <b>A</b>
<b>Maintenance and storage</b>	Looking ahead – Getting organised <b>A</b>
<i>Getting materials ready</i>	Analysing the coursebook
<i>When you go into class</i>	Teacher guts the coursebook before use in class <b>A</b>
<i>In class</i>	The coursebook vocabulary thread for students in class <b>A</b>
<i>Between tasks in class or between classes</i>	
<i>On leaving class</i>	
<i>Filing systems</i>	
<i>Personal favourites</i>	

**5 What can we teach with?**  
(continued)

Personalising the book  
Covering the coursebook A  
Coloured filters A  
Forging connections A  
Inner voice A  
Teacher dissects the coursebook at home A  
Altering the coursebook  
Teacher selects, rejects and supplements parts of the coursebook before use in class A

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**6 How can we vary the activities we do? 162**

6.1 Introduction  
6.2 Description of a learning activity  
The alphabet blackboard game A  
6.3 Definition of the features of an activity  
6.4 Changing the features of an activity  
6.5 The activity bank

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**7 Getting down to the preparation 180**

7.1 Introduction  
7.2 What is 'planning'?  
Why would we want to plan courses and lessons?  
Why would we not want to plan courses and lessons?  
Who can you do your planning with?  
When can you plan your courses and lessons?  
7.3 Specifying objectives  
The traditional view  
The 'starting from different angles' view  
*The students*  
*Time*

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**8 What are our freedoms and constraints? 212**

8.1 Introduction  
External variables  
8.2 Type of organisation  
8.3 Type of class  
Heterogeneous classes  
Practical principles for working with heterogeneous classes  
*Syllabus and content*  
*Materials and tasks*  
Mixed ability dictation A  
*Working together*  
Very large classes  
Practical principles for working with large classes



Teacher and students alter texts that are too short **A**  
 Teacher and students alter texts that are too long **A**  
 Adding the students in  
 Read aloud and shadow **A**  
 Different voices and gestures **A**  
 Reversals **A**

Creating things based on the coursebook  
 Using the pictures **A**  
 Bringing out the coursebook characters **A**  
 Things you can do with the coursebook apart from studying it **A**  
 Finishing off **A**  
**5.11 Conclusion**

Reading a text and then answering questions on it **A**  
 Dictation **A**  
 Repeating after the teacher **A**  
 Copying from the blackboard **A**  
 Reading a dialogue and then role playing it **A**

Checking homework around the class **A**  
 Filling in gaps in a cloze text **A**  
 Student presentations **A**  
 Memorising **A**  
**6.6 Conclusion**

*Generative activity frameworks*

*Content*

*How people learn*

*How teaching can be handled*

*Materials*

**7.4 What happens once you get some starting points**

Building courses, playing your course cards  
*Laying down one card, or the one card trick*  
*Playing similar sorts of cards*  
*Heart, club, diamond, heart, club, diamond*  
*One of spades, one of hearts, one of clubs*  
*Building a pack of cards*  
*Face down concentration*

**7.5 Before individual lessons**

*The zero option*

Writing lesson notes

*Different sorts of notes*

*Visualising the class*

In-class ideas

Immediately after class

More ambitious ideas for later on

*Keeping track*

*Analysis of tapes*

*Ideas for balancing up*

*Variety stars*

**7.6 The design model for planning**

**7.7 Conclusion**

*Crowd control*

*Basic chores*

*Group work*

One-to-one (or very small group) teaching

Practical principles for teaching one-to-one or very small groups

Exam classes

Practical principles for working with exam classes

*Transparency*

*Similarity*

*Get students in the study mood*

*Balance*

*Exam tips*

*Sort yourself out!*

Substitution classes

Practical principles for working with substitution classes

Using pictures **A**

Using an unusual methodology **A**

*Using teacher resource books*

*Using a topic-based lesson*

Classes with few resources or facilities

Practical principles for working with under-resourced classes

*Seating*

*Boards and display surfaces*

*Individual student materials*

**8 What are our freedoms and constraints? (continued)**

*Crowd control*

*Basic chores*

*Group work*

One-to-one (or very small group) teaching

Practical principles for teaching one-to-one  
or very small groups

Exam classes

Practical principles for working with exam  
classes

*Transparency*

*Similarity*

*Get students in the study mood*

*Balance*

*Exam tips*

*Sort yourself out!*

Substitution classes

Practical principles for working with  
substitution classes

Using pictures      **A**  
Using an unusual methodology      **A**  
*Using teacher resource books*  
*Using a topic-based lesson*  
Classes with few resources or facilities  
Practical principles for working with under-  
resourced classes  
*Seating*  
*Boards and display surfaces*  
*Individual student materials*  
**8.4 The unpredictability of working with  
people**  
Classes with students who don't get on  
Practical principles for working with classes  
who don't get on  
*Avoidance*  
*Confrontation*  
*Separate development*  
*Cooperation*

Undisciplined classes  
Practical principles for dealing with  
undisciplined classes  
*Before class*  
*In class*  
*After and between lessons*  
Hijacks: Pleasant and unpleasant surprises  
Practical principles for dealing with  
surprises and hijacks  
**8.5 The internal variable: Ourselves**  
Practical principles for dealing with  
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*Finding out about ourselves*  
*Working on our weaknesses*  
*Working on our strengths*  
**8.6 Conclusion**