# Teaching English Through English
# Module 6
## PTRA: Plan, Teach, Reflect, Adjust

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## Module 6: Start Here

*"There are three types of lessons: The one we plan to teach; the one we actually teach; and the one we wish we had taught."* - Unknown

Effective design and delivery of lessons lead to successful learning in communicative language classrooms. Teachers need to not only to plan and teach lessons, but also to reflect on how the lessons were taught and how the students interacted during the lessons. Through this module, you will explore ways that will help you design and develop lesson plans for your communicative language classrooms. You will also have a chance to delve deeper into reflective teaching practices that will benefit both you and your learners.

By the end of the module, you will be able to:

- plan, teach, reflect, and adjust lesson plans to promote effective communicative language practice in their classrooms
- develop an effective lesson plan for English learners that teaches language through meaningful context and promotes communicative interaction using engaging activities
- design effective lesson plans for English learners using the following steps: warm up, presentation, practice, application, and wrap up

## Explore

### ▶ 6.1. Watch

Explore ideas for how to write good objectives, how to sequence activities, and how to improve our instruction through reflective teaching by watching three videos.

- **Video 1: Writing Good Objectives**
  - This video will emphasize the importance of writing good objectives and suggest how to write good objectives.
  - Click here for a PDF of the script for Video 1.
  - Link to YouTube: https://youtu.be/IHo7eqElKg0

- **Video 2: Sequencing Activities**
  - This video will demonstrate how to sequence activities in a lesson to promote a meaningful language learning environment throughout instruction.
  - Click here for a PDF of the script for Video 2.
  - Link to YouTube: https://youtu.be/B7BXBQma8h8

- Video 3: Activating Your Reflective Teaching
  - This video explains the role that reflection plays in teachers' daily instruction. It also provides key questions you can ask to develop your reflective practice.
  - Click here for a PDF of the script for Video 3.
  - Link to YouTube:

Hi, English Teachers! Let's talk about writing a good objective. Objectives are the most important part of the lesson plan. If your lesson plan is like a recipe for a delicious dish, the objective is the end point. It represents the delicious dish that comes from following the instructions of the recipe step by step. The objective represents what students are expected to learn from the lesson. This is why you should always write your objectives by starting with:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to… or SWBAT.

For example, you are teaching students to talk about their family. Your objective would be:

By the end of the lesson, SWBAT (or students will be able to) talk about their family.

It is important to have concrete and observable objectives. Avoid using verbs like "understand" or "know", because those are not easy to observe. Think about it. How can I see if you understand or know the words for family members? However, I can observe if you can make a poster with your family members and talk about them. If the objective is stated as an action that is observable, then you can assess students' ability to achieve them. Let's do a quick quiz. Which of the following objectives are well-written?

By the end of the lesson, SWBAT…
1. learn about different kinds of weather, i.e., sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy, and windy.
2. know the different ways to describe weather, i.e., sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy, and windy.
3. understand sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy, and windy.
4. say if the weather is sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy, and windy when shown a picture card or gesture.

Which objective is well-written? Correct! The answer is d. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to say if the weather is sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy, and windy when shown a picture card or gesture. This is a concrete and observable objective. At the end of the lesson, you will be able to assess if your students have achieved this objective. This is the mark of a well-written objective.

Remember to start with SWBAT and use concrete, observable actions to write a good objective. Then you should be able to plan your lesson step by step to reach that objective, like a recipe that ends in a very delicious dish.

Hi, English Teachers! Let's talk about sequencing activities in your lesson plan. In order to achieve your objectives, you should have a lesson plan that scaffolds students' learning step by step. It isn't enough to have developmentally appropriate activities for young learners planned. The order or sequence of your activities is also very important. You should look at the activities in your textbook as well as other activities you create yourself and put them in an effective order.

The following are some simple Lesson Planning Rules that can be helpful for you to sequence your activities:

## 1. Present new language before asking students to practice it

You should present new language through listening or reading texts and check comprehension before asking students to practice it.

## 2. Use receptive tasks before productive tasks

You should encourage students to use receptive tasks, like listening and reading, before you ask students to complete productive tasks, like speaking and writing.

## 3. Provide controlled practice before independent practice

You should provide controlled or guided practice exercises before you ask students to produce new language independently. Young learners need some practice before they can do a freer, more communicative activity.

## Six-Step Lesson

There are different ways to set up a lesson. However, some lesson plans have 6 steps that look similar to this:

Six-Step Lesson
1. Warm-up
2. Presentation
3. Practice
4. Application
5. Wrap-up/Assessment
6. Follow-up

You can refer to the Lesson Plan Template attached to the video script.

### 1. Warm-up

In the Warm-up step, the teacher starts the lesson with activities that create interest and excitement for the lesson, link the day's lesson with previous lessons, and activate background knowledge about the content and the new language. If the lesson is about "family," you might show students a picture of a family and ask what they see.



"Family" by eommina via Pixabay is licensed under CC0

### 2. Presentation

In the presentation step, the teacher presents the relevant vocabulary and language structures in a meaningful context, like a story or a song, and checks comprehension. Usually this input is presented through listening or reading. You could present the language using a picture of your family. "This is my mother. She is kind. This is my father. He is kind. This is my brother. He is tall. This is my sister. She is smart."

### 3. Practice

In the practice step, the teacher gives students the opportunity to practice new language through controlled activities, such as fill-in-the-blank, reordering a story through picture cards, or even reading a story out loud with the teacher. Students practice using new language in predictable ways through post-listening or post-reading activities that include speaking and writing. In order to practice, you can give students labels with the family member and ask them to take turns putting the right label on the picture and say the name out loud. This is a controlled way for students to practice saying the name of the family members.

### 4. Application

In the application step, the teacher gives the students the opportunity to practice new language through free or independent activities. For young learners, some activities could be role playing or projects that encourage students to communicate something that is meaningful to them.

Application activities almost always involve speaking or writing. In the application step, the teacher can ask students to draw their family and get ready to present their family to the class.

## 5. Wrap-up/Assessment
In the Wrap-up or Assessment step, the teacher presents a final activity that reviews what was learned in class and assesses if learners have achieved the lesson objective. Sometimes teachers use a technique called "Exit Ticket." This is always the last activity that students need to complete in order to exit the classroom. It could be one question or handing in the last activity to the teacher. For the family lesson, the teacher could ask students to present their pictures to the class and say their family members out loud. They can hand in their picture before they leave class.

## 6. Follow-up
Follow-up could be homework or a plan for connecting today's lesson to the next lesson. Maybe your objective was "Students will be able to talk about their family" and the follow-up could be a project to make a poster with photos of their family members. You can encourage them to include any pets they have because the next unit is about animals.

This lesson plan structure will encourage you to present new language through receptive tasks, such as listening and speaking before asking students to produce speaking or writing tasks. In addition, it provides more controlled production activities before giving students a chance to produce more independently. This is how we scaffold language learning for young learners through our lesson planning. You may have a different type of lesson plan structure in your school, but you can still try to plan your lessons using these simple rules. Happy planning!

## Six-Step Lesson Plan Template

| Lesson Title | |
|---|---|
| Student profile | Description of your students (e.g., age, grade, proficiency level) |
| Skills to be emphasized | Listening, speaking, reading or writing |
| Language focus | *Grammar:<br>*New vocabulary: |
| Objectives | By the end of this lesson, SWBAT… |
| Materials | Materials needed for lesson activities |
| Lesson Plan | |
| 1. Warm-up | The teacher starts the lesson with activities that create interest and excitement for the lesson, link the day's lesson with previous lessons, and activate background knowledge about the content and the new language. |

| 2. Presentation | The teacher presents the relevant vocabulary and language structures in a meaningful context, like a story or a song, and checks comprehension. Usually this input is presented through listening or reading. |
|---|---|
| 3. Practice | The teacher gives students the opportunity to practice new language through controlled activities. Students practice using new language in predictable ways through post-listening or post-reading activities that include speaking and writing. |
| 4. Application (Production) | The teacher gives the students the opportunity to practice new language through free or independent activities. Students use the new language more independently to communicate something that is meaningful to them. Application activities almost always involve speaking or writing. |
| 5. Wrap-up/Assessment | The teacher presents a final activity that reviews what was learned in class and assesses if learners have achieved the lesson objective. |
| 6. Follow-up | The teacher may assign homework or connect today's lesson to the next lesson. |

Hello, English Teachers! Are you ready to power up your English classroom? Here are some tips for you to put to action your growing understanding of Reflective Teaching.

Remember, reflection ought to be an important part of our teaching practice. Reflection has a role throughout our lesson planning and teaching. It also has a specific role after the planning and teaching stages, and before the adjusting stage. Today, we want to go deeper into the reflecting stage.  Through regular practice of reflective teaching, we become lifelong learners who are striving to improve our teaching. We think about why we make the decisions we do but we also reflect on the results, and how our students responded to our activities, and lessons. We can see that reflective teaching can lead to an increase in our students' achievement.

So let's continue to think more about what reflective teaching is. Activating our reflective teaching means that we think deeply about what happened during a lesson, what went well and what may not have turned out as you had thought; and then, using this thinking, trying to improve it. Teachers think about how the lesson was taught and how our students responded to our teaching. The key questions we can ask ourselves as a reflective teacher are:

- Were the desired learning goals of the lesson met? Why or why not?
- What worked well in this lesson? What didn't? Why?
- Did learners act as expected? Why or why not?
- Did all the students participate actively? When?
- How can this lesson be improved to provide opportunities for better learning?

The theoretical foundations we stand on regarding reflective teaching are these:

- make note of how we are teaching **during** a lesson,
- think deeper about the events that unfolded in the day's lesson **after** we finish teaching,
- and consider what can be done to **improve the lesson** as we look to the **future.**

Basically, we are reflecting, reflecting, reflecting during, after, and into the future.

One of the ways to practice reflective teaching is by keeping a reflective journal. I am going to do some Think Alouds now by asking a series of questions that you might use during your reflective journaling. These reflective questions are comprehensive from the start to finish of your

teaching session and goes beyond your lesson planning. First, let's begin with questions I can ask when I consider the **learning objectives**:

- Did students understand the lesson? How did I measure or determine this?
- Were the basic objectives met? How do I know this?
- Was anything too fast or slow, easy or difficult?
- Is there anything I would do differently next time in preparation?
- What will I plan for the next set of objectives?

Next, how about the **activities and materials** I used?

- What materials and activities did we use? Which were effective? Ineffective? Why?
- How much English did the students use, and in what ways?
- What percentage of the time did I talk and use English? Did they talk and use English? •
  Did the activities and materials interest (motivate) students, and keep them engaged? •
  Which ones did they enjoy most? Least?
- Were there any "surprises" in today's class? If yes, how did they affect the lesson?
- Was there enough variation in types of activities and materials?
- Were there other activities or materials I could have used?
- What about future lessons as a continuation of this lesson?

Another category that is very critical to reflect on is my **classroom management** practice during the lesson.

- Did students stay on task?
- Were my instructions clear?
- Was I able to address individual students' academic and behavioral needs?
- Were the transitions between activities and classes smooth?
- Are there changes I would like to make in this area?
- Did I provide opportunities for all students to participate?

Overall, a question you can ask after each and every time you teach is,

- If I teach the lesson again, what will I do that is the same and what will I do differently?

You might be asking, do I have to do this for every lesson? Ask *all* of these questions and write down in a journal? Even though that may be ideal to start with, the answer is "no." You can choose a few questions to ask, depending on what you want to or need to work on. You might start with just reflecting on lesson objectives. If you are struggling with classroom management, then this is the area you work on until you see improvement. The choice is yours! Reflective

practice can become an effective professional learning routine, if you practice with consistency. Try and make it work for you!

Thanks for watching and learning. Now, let's go do it!

Adapted from

https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/module-14-reflective-teaching.pdf

# 6.2. Read

Explore ideas for plan, teach, reflect, and adjust by reading at least two articles.

- Article 1: Developing Dynamic Units for EFL by Joan Kang Shin

  o When teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), the classroom has to be a place in which language is not only taught but also used meaningfully. This article gives ideas for planning thematic units that help you develop lessons that are meaningful and communicative.

  o Source: Shin, J.K. (2007). Developing dynamic units for EFL. *English Teaching Forum, 45*(2), 2-8. https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/07-45-2-b.pdf

- Article 2: PTRA: Plan, Teach, Reflect, Adjust by Woomee Kim

  o Design, delivery, and reflection are fundamental to effective lesson planning. In this article, reflective teaching strategies are emphasized with a set of guiding questions that you can ask before, during, and after you teach a communicative lesson.

  o Source: Kim, W. (2021). PTRA: Plan, teach, reflect, and adjust. *Teaching English through English: English Speaking Nation for Uzbekistan Program.* *https://drive.google.com/file/d/1utrDM7Ma6FfVNzeC1qWynWDyToI4zmxd/view?usp=sharing*

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# Developing Dynamic Units for EFL

In foreign language situations, it can be challenging to find real-life communicative contexts in which to use the target language. When teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at any level, the classroom has to be a place in which language is not only taught but also used meaningfully. If language is being used "meaningfully" in the classroom, it is not taught only in isolated chunks or by breaking the language into its grammatical or semantic components. Instead, language is being used within a context that either mirrors real world discourse or possibly uses subject matter content, such as science, math, business, law, etc., depending on age of the learners and their purpose for studying English.

Using theme-based language instruction, which is one type of content-based instruction, can be helpful for various age groups and proficiency levels. Brinton (2003) supports the use of this approach when the purpose for EFL students is language acquisition. According to Brinton (2003, 203): "The thematic content stretches over several weeks of instruction, providing rich input for lessons that are either language-based (i.e., with a focus on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar) or skills-based (i.e., with a focus on listening, speaking, writing or reading). In this environment, students can successfully acquire language." For EFL teachers, developing thematic units around their required curriculum can be a way to build a larger context in which to teach language that spans a group of lessons and can provide more opportunities for communicating in English.

A unit of instruction, as referred to in this article, consists of a series of lessons that are connected to each other, possibly by a theme, grammatical point, or language function. A lesson, as defined by Brown (2001, 149), "is popularly considered to be a unified set of activities that cover a period of classroom time, usually ranging from forty to ninety minutes." Therefore, a thematic unit is a series of lessons, possibly for four to five classroom periods, that are connected by a topic or theme that connects students with language in a communicative manner.

### Support for Use of Thematic Units

There is much support for using this kind of foreign language instruction. Haas (2000) states: "Planning thematic units allows the teacher to incorporate a variety of language concepts into a topic area that is interesting and worthy of study and that gives students a reason to use the language." In addition, Brinton (2003) points out that using this type of instruction provides optimal conditions for language acquisition because "(1) language is being continually recycled throughout the unit and (2) students are given multiple opportunities to use the new language they acquire as they read, discuss, and write about the topics" (201). Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) also support the use of thematic unit planning for grades K–8 because they contend that thematic units provide a meaningful context in which to teaching language, thereby making the input more comprehensible as well as engaging the learner in more complex communicative situations that emulate real-life situations. Brown (2001) also points out that the use of theme-based instruction can be effective for EFL because it promotes automaticity, meaningful learning, intrinsic motivation, and communicative competence, which, he says, "put principles of effective learning into action" (236). Furthermore, use of thematic units integrates all four language skills communicatively, and as Oxford (2001) explains, it is this type of skills integration that "exposes English language learners to authentic language and challenges them to interact naturally in the language" (2). All this support for the use of thematic units is based in Krashen's (1985) notion that second language acquisition mirrors first language acquisition, which entails providing students with comprehensible and meaningful input in second language instruction. Certainly EFL teachers can apply this mode of instruction to foster acquisition in foreign language contexts.

If thematic units can be connected to familiar, interesting, and relevant topics for students, including grade level content for school age students, such units can provide opportunities to engage in real communication that can move beyond teaching language merely in its grammatical and semantic parts. In addition, as we will see in this article, the-matic units can be a dynamic way to integrate all four language skills communicatively and promote learner autonomy through project-based instruction and experiential learning. Since experiential learning, which can be found in the form of project work, "provides opportunities for the negotiation of meaning between learners in pair work and group work activities," it can help build the kind of acquisition environment that is needed in foreign language contexts (Eyring 2001, 335). It is through this notion of learning by doing, which is at the heart of experiential learning, that the classroom can become more than just a place to learn a foreign language; it becomes a place of meaningful communication using English and an independent process in which learners can think critically and make choices in realistic situations.

### Characteristics of Dynamic Units

This article will suggest some ways to make your EFL units more dynamic. These techniques can be applied to all grade levels as well as proficiency levels and can be applied to classrooms that are required to follow a set curriculum as well as classrooms that have more creative freedom. As we will see in the examples provided in this article, dynamic units for EFL instruction have five characteristics; they:

1. incorporate real life situations in instruction.
2. integrate all four language skills communicatively.
3. encourage learner autonomy or learner choice.
4. use experiential learning.
5. apply project-based learning.

These characteristics are not completely separate from each other since incorporating real life situations that are genuinely communicative tend to integrate the four language skills naturally. In addition, the use of experiential and project-based learning both encourage learner choice and autonomy, and using project work can be considered one kind of experiential learning. Therefore, the list is not mutually exclusive. However, the five characteristics are all, in their separate ways, important for an EFL teacher to consider when developing units of instruction based on a particular theme in order to spark learner

interest and provide real opportunities in the classroom for communication in English.

**Five Steps for Planning a Thematic Unit**

Now we will look at five steps toward building more dynamic units. Within each step are suggestions for application, which revolve around a specific example of a unit that can be applied in many different contexts—*Eating Out With Friends*.

**Step 1: Examine curriculum standards and required units for the class.**

First, consider what your students are required to learn, based on the curriculum standards set by your Ministry of Education and/or your school; then develop a theme that can support the current educational goals of your particular program or class. From there the challenge will be to build a thematic unit that can provide the learner with a larger context within which students can make meaningful connections while learning a foreign language. For school age students, it is highly recommended to make the learning process more holistic by connecting between the foreign language class and students' other classes since the most relevant topics for young learners revolve around their subject matter content (Curtain and Dahlberg 2004). Therefore, a study of the grade level curriculum for students in their required subjects might also be useful. However, regardless of age level or relevant subject matter content, the starting point for the thematic units should come from your EFL program's curricular goals; once you meet those goals, you can move toward what interests and motivates learners the most.

*Application: Eating Out With Friends Unit*

Many EFL textbooks have a chapter or section on food and drink or ordering food in a restaurant. It is a common topic for language instruction that has real-life application particularly because international travel is a main purpose for learning English. The language functions for ordering food at a restaurant and asking for the check or bill are easily found in most textbooks for English at the adult, secondary, and even primary levels. Therefore, the example for developing a thematic unit in this article will focus on this commonly used topic for EFL instruction.

**Step 2: Choose a theme that is meaningful and relevant to students.**

There are several considerations when selecting an appropriate theme (Curtain and Dahlberg 2004; Crandall 1998). The theme should:

- be motivating, interesting, and relevant to the learners (and teacher).
- connect to real-life situations, including content from across the curriculum for school age children.
- appeal to and/or develop various learning styles and intelligences.
- provide a context for meaningful, authentic discourse and interaction.
- facilitate the development of appropriate, useful and real-world language functions and communication modes.
- connect to the target culture(s), wherever possible.

The most important aspects of choosing an appropriate theme are that it be interesting and meaningful to students and that it have potential for real-life application. Realistically, it is necessary to acknowledge that the choice of theme may be determined by the required texts or curriculum of the school or school system, but the choice of materials and activities in the next steps can make any theme more motivating, interesting, and relevant to students.

*Application: Eating Out With Friends Unit*

In order to choose a theme that incorporates the commonly found topic in various textbooks mentioned in Step 1—ordering at a restaurant—we need to consider the audience and real life communicative situation. Even though we could use variations of this content for learners at all levels, let's consider creating a lesson for secondary students at the high school level. A common context in which young adults would use language for ordering at a restaurant would be for "Eating Out With Friends." As we will see in the next few sections, this theme and its real-life application will be the defining organizational force in the planning process. Note that the theme is much broader than ordering food at a restaurant and has been created to incorporate this language function into a larger communicative context.

**Step 3: Brainstorm ideas that can incorporate real-life situations and tasks.**

Using a web, chart, or list can be helpful to brainstorm ideas. The approach to brainstorming can be based on real-life tasks that are necessary for communication or based on different subject or content areas. The approach to brainstorming depends on the purpose or approach to your particular EFL classroom. For example, if you wanted to develop a unit for young learners (5–12 years old) related to content, then you might consider webbing activity ideas based on the various subjects the learners study, such as math, science, social studies, physical education, art, etc. This is a way to infuse the subject content that students are learning into foreign language instruction, since that content is meaningful to their lives.

However, thematic units do not necessarily have to incorporate content from different school subjects. Choice of an appropriate theme should always be based on what is most interesting and relevant to your learners and can often be based on purposeful, real-life tasks in a particular social situation or context.

*Application: Eating Out With Friends Unit*

Because this thematic unit is based on an authentic social situation that includes specific communicative tasks, the brainstorming revolved around the different stages of the social event. Notice that in Figure 1 there are various ways to invite friends to dinner, to make a reservation, or to get to the restaurant. The purpose of the brainstorming is to write down every possibility in order to decide which ones are going to the best ones to use based on availability of resources, level of difficulty, and the variety of skills and text types.

**Step 4: Choose, organize, and order the activities.**

After brainstorming ideas for a particular theme, it is a good idea to put these ideas in a chart. (See Figure 2.) Putting the activities in a chart helps you to see what kinds of activities can be used and what content is covered. In addition to creating a meaningful context in which to teach language, it is also important to order the activities effectively. When organizing and ordering the activities in a unit, you will want to think about:

1. varying the tasks and language skills.
2. choosing the activities that are the most useful to your learners.
3. ordering the tasks to mirror the real life application of the tasks.
4. connecting one activity to the next, i.e. from receptive to productive skills.
5. sequencing the content in order to recycle language and scaffold students' learning.

This is an important step in planning individual lessons within a unit. In order to make sure that the unit is relevant and motivating for the learners, it might be helpful to give the learners some power to choose which activities might be most useful and interesting for them. Whenever possible, try to give the learners some autonomy in the planning stages.

**Figure 1: Brainstorming real-life tasks with a web**

**18**
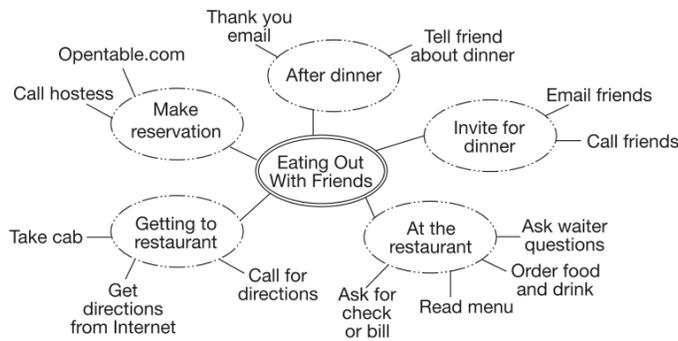
*Application: Eating Out With Friends Unit*

Notice in Figure 2 that the activities that had been brainstormed in the web above have been ordered based on the real-life order of the various tasks. In addition, the language skills and content used for each communicative function have been listed as well. Obviously in most activities the skills are naturally integrated because the communication is two way; therefore, reading and writing tend to be paired as well as listening and speaking. Now that the activities are ordered, it might be necessary to eliminate some depending on availability of resources. For example, if students cannot get easy access to the Internet, then it might be difficult to get directions through Google Maps (maps.google.com). However, you might keep the activities for making Internet reservations and finding information on restaurants on OpenTable.com by printing out samples from your own computer and handing out hard copies of screen shots for authentic reading practice. As discussed above, the choice of which way to invite someone or to make a dinner reservation, orally over the phone or in writing through email, could be decided by the learners themselves. If one way is more interesting or relevant to them, they can let you know which one to incorporate in instruction. In the chart, the tasks chosen for this unit are shaded. Notice that the tasks chosen for the unit balance the instruction of all four skills, recycle the use of language content, and can be incorporated well into the project developed in the next step.

Based on the tasks chosen, the unit could then be planned as five consecutive lessons:

Thematic Unit: Eating Out With Friends

Lesson 1: Inviting friends to dinner by phone

Lesson 2: Using OpenTable.com (includes finding a restaurant and making a reservation)

Lesson 3: Getting directions to a restaurant

Lesson 4: Ordering food at a restaurant (includes reading the menu)

Lesson 5: After eating out with friends (includes thank you email and talking to a friend)

**Step 5: Incorporate projects that can encourage learner choice and autonomy**

Once you have chosen the activities and established the order of the activities, you can develop a project in which the learners can use the language communicatively by experiencing the language in a realistic situation. This project should connect to all of the lessons and be an integral part of the unit. Use of project-based learning or project work offers the following positive points for foreign language learning: It focuses on real-world subject matter and topics of interest, is student-centered, is cooperative, integrates skills authentically, has a real purpose, is motivating, and fosters learner autonomy (Alan and Stoller 2005; Stoller 1997). A good project should encourage learners to cooperate with each other using the target language communicatively, and it should incorporate all of the language learned in the whole unit. The project should also allow learners to make choices and think critically about the subject matter.

*Application: Eating Out With Friends Unit*

The project for this unit is ongoing, and students work together in the same groups throughout the duration of the unit. In groups of 4 or 5, students create their own restaurant, which entails deciding on the type of cuisine, type of dining (i.e., casual, casual elegant, or fine dining) and the name of the restaurant and then writing a description of the restaurant, an appropriate food and drink menu, and a map with directions to the restaurant. Then the students will prepare their restaurant for others to see on Restaurant Day, which is scheduled at the end of the unit. There are two established goals for this project:

> ***Goal 1: Each group will prepare a restaurant and classmates will be their customers.*** Preparation of the restaurant will begin after students learn about different restaurants when using OpenTable.com or reading hard copy samples from that site. On Restaurant Day, the restaurants will be set up in different areas of the room, and students will take turns practicing English while making a reservation for a customer, giving directions to the customer, and then hosting a group of friends eating out.

**Figure 2: Organizing tasks with a chart**

| Real-life Tasks | Skills | Language Content |
|---|---|---|
| Inviting through email and accepting an invitation | Reading, writing | Letter form – greeting, body, signature<br>Present Progressive/Future Tense<br>*I am going to…What are you doing on…?*<br>*I am having… Will you be free…?*<br>Asking opinion<br>*What kind of cuisine/food/restaurant do you prefer?*<br>Vocabulary: cuisines, types of dining, price range, types of food and drink |
| Calling friends to go out and eat and accepting phone invitations | Listening, speaking | Phone greetings and farewells<br>Present Progressive/Future Tense<br>*I am going to…What are you doing on…?*<br>*I am having… Will you be free…?*<br>Asking opinion<br>*What kind of cuisine/food/restaurant do you prefer?*<br>Vocabulary: cuisines, types of dining, price range, types of food and drink |
| Making a dinner reservation over the phone | Listening, speaking | Requesting/making reservation<br>*I would like to make a reservation for…on…*<br>*Would you like to…?*<br>How many in your party? |
| Finding a restaurant; reading restaurant descriptions and sample menus on OpenTable.com | Reading, writing | Scanning for information<br>Vocabulary: cuisines, locations, types of dining, price range, party size, types of food and drink |
| Making an Internet reservation through OpenTable.com | Reading, writing | Scanning for information<br>Vocabulary: cuisines, locations, types of dining, price range, party size, types of food and drink |
| Finding directions to the restaurant through Google Maps (maps.google.com) and sending them to friends | Reading, writing | Reading a map and directions<br>*Go straight… Turn left/right at…*<br>Writing email to friends with a link to map and directions |
| Taking a cab and giving driver directions | Listening, speaking | Giving directions: Imperative<br>*Go straight… Turn left/right at…* |
| Calling the restaurant for directions and giving directions to your friend | Listening, speaking | Giving directions: Imperative<br>*Go straight… Turn left/right at…*<br>Discourse markers: *First, Next, Then, Now,* etc. |
| Reading a menu | Reading, writing | Vocabulary: different food, drinks, cuisines |
| Ordering food from a waiter and asking for the check/bill | Listening, speaking | Request<br>*I would like…Could we have…?*<br>*Would you like…?* |
| Writing a thank you email to friends and responding to a thank you email | Reading, writing | Thank you letter form – greeting, body, signature<br>Thank you so much for…<br>I really appreciated…<br>Past tense |
| Talking to another friend about the dinner | Listening, speaking | Past tense<br>Discourse markers: First, Next, Then, Now,  etc. |

***Goal 2: Each group will go out with a group of friends in twos or threes.*** Students will first engage in inviting and accepting invitations, making reservations, and finding directions to the restaurant, which will occur during class time in the various lessons in the unit. On Restaurant Day, students will engage in a role play in which they eat at one of their classmates' restaurants. Finally, students will send thank you notes to each other and tell another friend what happened at dinner.

With these goals, students will participate in a project that will encourage creativity with the language content as well as real communication in English. In addition, it will provide a way for students to experience the language for all the different tasks involved with eating out with friends since foreign language contexts cannot provide a real world experience in English.

### Conclusion

More detailed lesson plans must be designed for each day of instruction; however, the five steps suggested in this article with the examples for application have given some useful ideas for how to conceptualize a theme and develop effective units for EFL instruction. The example unit called *Eating Out With Friends* shows how to bring real-life tasks into the classroom, integrate all four skills communicatively, encourage learner autonomy, use project work, and employ experiential learning. Units of instruction which have these characteristics will most likely lead learners to improve their ability to communicate in English and make classes more lively and motivating. Even in countries where real-life communicative contexts in English are hard to find, EFL teachers can still plan creatively around their required curriculum in order to build dynamic thematic units that can bring authentic communication into the classroom.

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# PTRA: Plan, Teach, Reflect, and Adjust
# A Foundational Lesson Design & Delivery Routine

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One of the most important aspects of sound pedagogy is lesson planning. Before we teach any lesson, the fundamental first step is to consider the design and delivery of your instruction. Just as we are learning about effective classroom routines for various purposes, the process of lesson design and delivery can become an instructional routine which teachers can put into practice on a regular basis. Concrete lesson designs also support teachers to carry out dynamic thematic units, where one lesson connects to the next in order to achieve the desired learning goals.

In this article, PTRA: Plan, Teach, Reflect, and Adjust is introduced to the readers as a design and delivery routine. In Greek, the word "petra" means solid rock, like a good foundation. The PTRA routine connects to that analogy, as this practice can serve as a good foundation to effective instruction.

## PLANNING STAGE

In the planning stage, we want to present meaningful topics that capture students' interests and allow room for safe risk-taking during communicative activities. The lessons should be designed with learning goals and clear expectations for accomplishing those goals. Along with the lesson objectives, it is also good practice to consider who our learners are (their age, English language proficiency, native language, learning preferences, etc.), what skills we want to emphasize through the lesson, and materials necessary to deliver this lesson. Here are six planning steps and several guiding questions you can use as a template to design your lessons:

### Step 1. State/write the objectives for the lesson
- What are the learning goals for your lesson?
- Are these goals meaningful and relevant to the students? Why?
- Do your students have any prior knowledge on the lesson topic? If yes, how will their prior knowledge help them accomplish the learning goals?

### Step 2. Warm-up
- What activities can you do to help your students anticipate what is to come in this lesson?
- Will you review any topics from the previous lesson?

### Step 3. Presentation

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- Is your presentation teacher-centered? If so, what activities can you incorporate to promote student involvement?
- Will your presentation lead your students to achieve the learning goals?

**Step 4. Practice**

- What guided practices will you provide for students to familiarize themselves with the topics/skills presented?
- Will you do practice as a whole class? Will you do practice in groups or pairs to provide opportunities for all students to practice?
- Is there support for your struggling students during practice? How will you support them in order to help them be successful in the next stage?

**Step 5. Application**

- How can your students apply what they have learned and practiced in meaningful ways?
- Will you incorporate activities/projects to enhance student understanding and skills?
- Will your students work individually, in pairs, or in groups?

**Step 6. Wrap-up**

- How will you check for student understanding and achievement of the learning goals as you finish up the lesson?
- Will there be any follow-up activities to promote mastery of skills and the learning from this lesson?

- Will you provide opportunities for self-evaluation, teacher feedback, and/or peer feedback? Will your students be given opportunities to reflect on their lesson achievements?

An important point to note is the time it will take to carry out this plan. Asking how long each step is expected to take is very critical to the success of meeting the learning outcomes. In order for students to develop their communicative language skills, most of the time in a lesson should be spent on Steps 4-6. Ample time should be allotted for students to practice and acquire the communication skills necessary to achieve the learning goals.

**TEACHING STAGE**

Take the lesson designed during the Planning Stage and teach using it. Again, remember to consider who your learners are, what your students were learning in the previous lesson, and what you want them to accomplish by the end of the day's lesson. Make an effort to meet the time you have allotted for each part of the lesson and write down how long each part actually takes. Also, take note on appropriateness of the materials and content, as you check for student understanding throughout the lesson.

Even though the design plan has been laid out step-by-step, the order and frequency of steps #4-6 are not. Teachers can take comfort in the flexibility in this design. For example, presentation can be divided into two parts within a lesson where students are given explicit instruction of the first

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point of the lesson, then move onto practice. Next, the second part of the lesson can be presented, then move onto a time of practice relevant to the presentation. Students can move onto net to application using what was practiced in both of the sessions. Furthermore, if there is not enough time left for application after practice, the lesson can also be extended over two-days. With stated learning goals and warm-up activities eliciting the previous day's lesson and practice, students can spend the entire time to complete application and wrap up.

### REFLECTING STAGE

Reflection is a critical component of teacher development. After planning and teaching a lesson, a teacher must reflect on how the lesson was carried out in terms of successes and challenges the teacher and the students have experienced toward meeting the learning outcomes. If our students did not achieve the learning goals by the end of this lesson, we must also consider how we might re-teach it so that the student learning can be observed in accordance with the stated objectives. The reflecting stage is necessary to improve the lesson and to deliver a more effective lesson the next time the teacher has the opportunity to teach it again. If the lesson plan was typed into a computer, take note on what went well/wrong, how do you know this, and what you can do better to improve the lesson. Some guiding questions you can ask to reflect on the lesson taught are the following:

- Did your students achieve the learning goals? If yes, how do you know that? If no, how do you know that?
- How would you re-teach it the next day to support their learning, if your students did not achieve the learning goals?
- Which parts of the lesson were successful? What part of the lesson would you keep for the next time you teach this lesson and why?
- Which parts of the lesson were unsuccessful? What part would you adjust to improve the lesson for the next time you teach this lesson and why?
- Did the lesson and activities within this lesson foster critical thinking in your students?
- Did the lesson and activities within this lesson promote collaboration?
- Do you feel that the lesson and activities engage students in a safe and inclusive manner?
- Would you distribute the parts of this lesson differently the next time? If yes, why?

### ADJUSTING STAGE

After our reflections, if there are areas for improvement, we need to make adjustments to our lesson design as soon as possible. It is very possible that we need to adjust the next day's lesson because we had a difficult time meeting the learning goals in the lesson we had just taught. Because our teaching lives move at a very fast pace, if we put off this stage, we might never get back to it and eventually forget to make these important adjustments for the next

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time we teach it. Therefore, adjusting after reflecting must become a part of our best practices in teaching. We can take notes using these sentence starters:

- I achieved/did not achieve these learning goals because…
- I will adjust and re-teach tomorrow's lesson because…
- I will keep/revise these parts for the next time I teach this lesson because…
- If I am teaching a different group of students, I will keep/revise…

The reflection and adjustment stages are important because this process can also inform the next planning stage in your teaching sequence.

PTRA is foundational to effective lesson design and can become a routine for teachers to use with ease. Remember that the questions are merely guiding and that the teacher using these tools has the power to adjust and be flexible with the suggestions. Feel free to add your own guiding questions or take out the ones that are not very useful to you. Exercise the teacher autonomy to the fullest extent when designing a lesson.

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## 6.3. Search

Explore more teaching resources about plan, teach, reflect, and adjust. You can also search these websites for more teaching resources:

- American English Resources page
- Open Educational Resources Commons
- British Council Teaching Secondary Resources page
- Pearson Classroom Resources
- Read, Write, Think

*(Hint: Try using these keywords: lesson planning, reflective teaching, communicative activities. Type the keywords in the "Search Our Resources" space located in the middle of the web page. Explore the other sites using a similar approach.)*

Take notes here:

![George Mason University logo]

## Do

### 6.4. Think

*Think about one or more of the following questions regarding lesson plans that promote classroom interactions:*

- What are some examples of communicative lesson plans you have used successfully in your teaching context? What is your favorite communicative lesson plan that you have taught? Explain why.

- If you do not use communicative lesson plans yet, what aspects would you like to improve, either from "PTRA" or "Six-Steps of Lesson Planning"?

- What are the challenges in creating communicative lesson plans for your learners?

Take notes here:

## 6.5. Create

Based on your preference choose one of the following tasks:

Choose a lesson plan you have used before and make any changes and/or improvements to reflect what you have learned about communicative lesson planning.

**OR**

Think of a lesson you have previously taught. Consider "Plan, Teach, Reflect, Adjust (PTRA)" and reflect in 4 paragraphs how you planned for the lesson, how you have taught the lesson, what you now reflect about the lesson, and what you will adjust in this lesson for the next time you will be teaching it.

**OR**

Think of a lesson you would like to teach. Use the Six-steps of lesson planning and design a communicative lesson in detail. Consider what activities you might want to use to teach the content and promote communication in your classroom.

*Note: This will be added to your Portfolio.*

Take notes here:

## 6.6. Share

Share the lesson plan you improved/created in the group chat. Be sure you post a lesson that you have not seen already in the group chat. Please post a brief message and attach a Word document, PDF, or PPT slides with your activity.

*Example*

*Hello, Colleagues! The activity I want to share to increase classroom interaction is called*

*_____ (activity title). This*

*lesson is effective because_____*

*_____. See the attached file for an example on how I use this lesson in my classroom. (Be sure to attach your activity file.)*

## 6.7. Apply

After you share a lesson in the group chat, read through your colleagues' lessons. Find at least one or two <u>new</u> lessons in the group chat that you can use in your next class. Apply a new lesson from this module in your next class. If it was a success, be sure to send a message and tell your colleague "Thank you!" and why it was effective.

Take notes here:

# 6.8. Reflect

Write 1-2 paragraphs to reflect on Module 6 (300-500 words). You may use what you have created, shared, and applied in the previous tasks.

*Note: This will be added to your Portfolio.*

Take notes here:

## Module 6 Checklist:

- ☐ I watched three videos.
- ☐ I read two articles.
- ☐ I searched for a few new web resources to help my teaching.
- ☐ I thought about communicative lesson plans and wrote down some reflections.
- ☐ I created a new lesson plan or improved an existing lesson plan to promote meaningful communication in my classroom.
- ☐ I shared my communicative lesson plan with my colleagues on Telegram.
- ☐ I applied at least one new communicative lesson plan from my Telegram group in my teaching context.
- ☐ I wrote 1-2 paragraphs to reflect on my learning in Module 6.