

## MAKING A COMMUNICATIVE CLASSROOM MORE COMMUNICATIVE: WHAT TO CONSIDER IN A LESSON PLAN

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**Abstract:** *In the world with rapid developing technological advancements, it becomes more crucial to learner one of the world languages, especially English. Unlike past, today's needs for language is not only to understand a written text and translate it into another one, but also to be able to have a conversation with a business partner or other individuals in various parts of the world. For this sense, to be a fluent communicator is the main purpose of language learning, as well as teaching.*

**Key words:** *CLT, lesson plan, learner's need, needs analysis, differentiation, learner's lack, level-based input.*

### **Introduction**

With the emergence of the method Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) several approaches began to appear in classroom such as dialogue, role-play, stimulation and presentations, but the question is that does the lesson expected to develop students' skills for communication really make so? A role-play, for example, allows students have an opportunity to practice for both speaking and listening in a real-life context. In a presentation, several skills – presenting, body language, confidence in a public, fluency can be boosted. Tasks, however, such as a dialogue makes the class easily teacher-led, not student-centered, as the speech students have to recite is already fixed and students' work here is merely to repeat it word by word (Thornbury, 1996). To reach intended goal it is important let students have referential question that they can relate the situation to real-life and give an answer based on own experience and knowledge, also teachers do not know the answers in advance. Application of those activities supposed to enhance students' language development is as crucial as adapting them for students' needs, interests, lacks and wants. With the development of technology, the population of English learners has been risen, but their need for language comes from different trajectory. Having said that, it is noticed that a language learner coming into classroom have exact needs for learning a language and flaws hindering him/her to reach his/her aims. Before each class those factors must be taken into consideration by instructors as well.

### **Subject of the study**

The target learners' group chosen for the study is teenagers between 17 to 19 age group, attending learning centre to EGP group. The group encompasses both genders, 8

boys and 5 girls, in total 13 students. All of them already graduated from school, some still are there at 11 grade and want to learn new modern jobs, such as SMM manager, Full stack developer or Frontend programmer, shortly belong to IT. They come from different nationalities: Uzbek, Russian and Tajik. Their L1, thus, diverges accordingly. There are some bilinguals, studied(es) at a school where the Russian language is as a medium of instructions learned and various languages are taught as a foreign and a second language. They all are passionate and talented about learning English, there are no disabled students who require extra help and approaches to deal with and meet their needs as well. Their approximate level is pre-intermediate B1 based on CEFR description. They can apply simple constructions into spoken or written speech and can engage in basic daily conversation. They are aware of simple grammar rules but still mistakes can be noticed in their writings and speeches.

Before coming learning centre, they had been learning English at different place with various methods. Three of them are at school, so they've been learning English since they were the second grade at school. But kept application of old-fashioned methods: GTM with rote learning, drilling, focus-on-meaning free engagement and lack of interaction have avoided them to become fluent users of language in a mentioned period 10 years, 102 academic hours annually. The rest members of group had attended another language centre for two months. The main reason to learn language is to be competent and confident communicator and presenter so that they can be successful in their future career, in addition much information is available English language so they can easily access necessary websites to get info IT relevant.

The LC is in Tashkent city, where several facilities exist to facilitate the learning process. All classrooms are supplied with the latest technologies such as projector, electronic board, printer, computer and speaker. To provide appropriate and modern classroom setting single-seats were chosen, so classroom setting pattern is adjustable in accord with activities, because certain type of activity requires certain interactional patterns such as group work, peer-work, and individual. Waller et al. (2017) suggested that "The way teachers organize their classroom furniture is a reflection of their conscious attention (or lack of attention) to their teaching philosophies" (p.10). Thus, creating an atmosphere that facilitates the learning process and enables interaction is teachers' responsibility. The capacity of each room is up to 15 single-seats at most. U-shaped classroom setting pattern is kept mainly to maintain observation of all students simultaneously, as not always traditional class arranging pattern can ensure interaction, especially it arranges students into lines, as classification of students in accord with their knowledge. "Having the students sit in a U-shaped formation or move their desks into small circles seems to be the best way to promote group work and feelings of inclusion for the classroom community, which in turn can foster motivation, greater respect for each other, and cross-cultural communication" (Waller, 2017, p.10). Consideration of the

atmosphere exists in classroom is significant, as it should employ for mitigation of any shortcomings in learning process and engagement of every student.

The course is designed for six months to reach target C1, 3 times a week and two-hourlong sessions. Because the course is EGP and students' future career requires them to be good communicators and presenters, the focus is put on developing general communicative competence, not deeming into exact academic style. According to needs analysis all students have similar level and motivation for learning English, so they are in a group now.

### Methodology

To delve into the very topic triangular approach is chosen: research, observation and questionnaire. First, several course books were investigated to determine whether students can have conversations on real-life topics, the level of activities and texts are appropriate for learners' linguistic abilities and background knowledge to promote i+1 approach suggested by Krashen and to meet students' needs and lacks. By visiting to LCs to get familiar with learning situations and observe classes, the data about learning facilities and atmosphere of classroom was gathered. It is also vital to have a talk with teachers and instructors what they take into account before their class to make lesson communicative. For this reason, making a questionnaire can be seen as an effective tool not only because it helps to gather data but also it saves time and energy.

### Lesson plan sample

Text passages in activity 1 take from the book Prepare for 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

<b>Topic: Useful websites</b> <b>Done by: Dilafruz Abdurashidova</b> <b>Subject/Course: General English</b> <b>Level: B1</b> <b>Language focus: Reading &amp; Speaking</b> <b>Language aspect: Conjunction and Sequence words.</b>		<b>Date: n/a</b> <b>Age: 17-19</b> <b>Number of students: 13</b> <b>Boys: 8</b> <b>Girls: 5</b> <b>Duration: 90 min</b>
<b>Content objectives:</b> <b>SWBAT</b> - analyze crucial features of various websites in a detailed text. - describe a website with the help of topic related vocabularies in dialogue.	<b>Language objectives:</b> <b>SWBAT</b> - identify the content and merits of websites from the text by using skimming. [CEFR, 3.1.1.3/Reading for information and argument/B1: R, V] - use thematic vocabularies (upload, download, access) flexibly about websites in discussions and presentations. [CEFR, 3.3.1.1/Information exchange/B2: S,V] - use sequenced words to make compound sentences and show the order of an action while making presentations. [CEFR, 5.1/Grammatical accuracy and vocabulary range/B1-B2: S,V,F]	
<b>Prior knowledge:</b> Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at		

times. (CEFR, 5.1 General linguistic range, B1)		
Materials: Projector, computer, handouts, blackboard, pictures of website icons.		
Interaction patterns: T-whole class, peer-work, group-work, individual.		
Instruction strategies: ZPD, i+1, Active learning, Connecting prior knowledge, Collaborative learning, Elicitation, Jigsaw instruction, Instructional scaffolding.		
<b>Procedure</b>	<b>ICQs/CCQs</b>	<b>T ime/ Ann.</b>
<b>Warm-up</b>		
Teacher will show pictures of websites' icons and elicit students for what websites those icons refer to. Students will find out those websites' names (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Tweeter, messenger, Pinterest, WhatsApp, snapchat, skype ... etc.). Teacher will ask questions from students (What kind of functions has Instagram got? Has Instagram got useful features, if yes, what? What are the disadvantages of Instagram?) Students will answer questions based on their experience and linguistic knowledge.		[ 8 min] L , S, V, P, F
<b>Activity 1</b>		
<b>Pre-activity</b> Teacher will give definitions to certain words and ask students to find what words they are. (e.g., to move information/photo/video from a small computer to a computer network so that other people can see it or use it - upload; site, the web, download, edit, save, search, record, blog, link, post, message board, file, copy, cut, menus). Students will try to find, and teacher will write them on the board.	Will everyone work alone? (No, with elbow peer) What kind of information are we looking for from each text? (Usefulness of website) Will you discuss with your partner? (Yes) What kind of information can you find from the website (name of a website will be provided)? (Students will tell what they learn)	[ 15 min] L , S, P, V, F
<b>While-activity</b> Teacher will distribute reading material about 6 different websites. Students will read texts with their elbow partners and discuss their advantage to be ready to present other groupmates. Teacher will ask some ICQs to check whether understand instructions clearly or not. After students finish reading and discussion, one person from every peer group will present usefulness of the website they read about.	How many spaces are there? What kind of words are you going to use (from the box above)?	[ 6 min] R , F, V, D
<b>Post-activity</b> Teacher will distribute handouts to students. Students will do a gap filling task based on the input they are exposed while-activity. <b>Differentiation:</b> For lower-level students, teacher will distribute handouts will options provided.		
<b>Activity 2</b>		

<p><b>Pre-activity</b> Student will watch a video about the history of YouTube platform. While they are watching, they need to take notes, as they will discuss data mentioned the video with teacher in while activity.</p>		<p>[ 8 min] L , W, V, T</p>
<p><b>While-activity</b> Teacher will write some sequence words and conjunctions on the board such as ( at first, secondly, then, later, finally, and, because so). Teacher will ask questions (What happened at first? What kind of data uploaded YouTube first? What kind of functions were introduced in the 2005? Why did companies complain about their privacy? Then, what happened?). As students are telling the notes that they take while watching the video and discussing with other students, teacher will write sentences on the board in accord with the data students are presenting. After students tell all the notes they take, teacher ask student what sequence word or conjunction is the most suitable one to connect the sentences. (On the 14 February, in 2005, YouTube launched by three PayPal employees. First video was uploaded by John Karem, named "Me at the zoo". The first office of YouTube was established in SanMateo in California. Five-star rating system, playlist, full screen view and subscription were introduced in December 2005. In 2006, YouTube became the fastest growing online platform. It was the fifth biggest platform in the year. YouTube teamed up with vivendi. They began launching new music services - Vevo. Companies complained about privacy and unfair licensing terms etc.)</p>		<p>[ 10 min ] S , L, W, F, V</p>
<p><b>Post-activity</b> Teacher will ask student to connect sentences that he writes on the board using sequence words and conjunctions and create a cohesive text. <b>Differentiation:</b> Higher level students will be informed that they can add more sentences to the text if they want and use conjunctions and sequence words to connect them.</p>	<p>Should you use conjunctions and sequence words to connect sentences? (Yes) Can you add more? (Yes) Will you write an essay? (No, just a paragraph)</p>	<p>[ 8 min] W , V, F</p>
<b>Activity 3</b>		
<p><b>Pre-activity</b> Teacher will elicit from students for what purpose they use YouTube and are there any advantages and disadvantages? Students will give their ideas about YouTube as brainstorming.</p>		<p>[ 3 min] S , L, V, P, F</p>

<p><b>While-activity</b> Teacher will distribute sweets with two different colour coverage in a bag and every student will have a chance to choose on their own. In accord with the coverage colour, students will be divided into two groups. Students will discuss the advantage and disadvantage YouTube. One group will prevent one side and give their opinions</p>	<p>Group one for advantages, two for disadvantages, right? (Yes, or No) Are you write an essay now? (No, discussion)</p>	[ 15 min]	S, L, P, F, V, D
<p><b>Post-activity</b> Teacher will demonstrate different sequence words and conjunctions on the white board with the help of projector one by one and students will be asked to make a sentence using the words shown. This activity is more of creating a story, the sentences students will create should be meaningfully coherent to have linked each other. Students can do this activity in the groups.</p>	<p>Will you create a sentence using the word shown on board? (Yes) Should every sentence have connected each other meaningfully? (Yes)</p>	[ 6 min]	S, L, F, P, V, T
<b>Extension</b>			
<b>Pre-activity</b> *			
<p><b>While-activity</b> Teacher will distribute some folded sheet of papers with numbers written on them. In accord with those numbers' students will take turn to do the task. Teacher will ask some ICQs to identify whether they understand how to do activity while instructing students how to do. Students will do a spinner quiz and answer questions on them simultaneously.</p>	<p>Will there be questions or information in each plate of spinner wheel? (a question) According to the numbers on papers you have, you will answer questions? (True)</p>	[ 10 min]	L, S, F, V, P
<b>Post-activity</b> *			
<b>Homework</b>			
<p>Students will be given homework in accord with course book they are studying</p>	<p>What pages will you do? How many words you must learn by heart?</p>	[ 2 min]	S, L
<b>Assessment</b>			
<b>Activity 1/Post-activity</b>			
Number of correct answers	6	5-4	3 and lower
Score	5	4	3
<b>Activity 2/While-activity</b> The group will win discuss take better marks. Teacher can give feedback grammarly and content based in accord with students performance			
<b>Keys/Answers</b>			
<b>Resources</b>			

## Reflection

Adapted from Ashcraft (2014), Farrell (2002) and Clasby (2016)

**Discussion**

The results of needs assessment revealed that nearly all learners in the group have identical expectations of learning English: having good commands orally and improve general English. Because of the needs of a language for their work: especially speaking and reading, this lesson plan was developed based on a content topic around their field of specialist with language focus on reading and speaking. The language aspect was also chosen in accord with the content and language need. According to CEFR description a B1 level students "can understand most factual information that they are likely to come across on familiar subjects of interest, provided they have sufficient time for rereading" (p.56). Accordingly, the chosen reading passages are relatively short, but factual and informative. One thing more to be consider that by relying on CEFR description, level-based text can be chosen, not too simple or challenging activity. As for speaking, it is stated as "B1 leveler can use appropriate technical terminology when exchanging information or discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists"(p.78), so making a dialogue using topic related vocabularies can be a realistic task. Moreover, CEFR Companion is the most suitable framework to identify students' prospective outcomes. As it can be utilised for pedagogical purposes, it eases assessment of tasks as well. "For pedagogical use of the CEFR for learning, teaching and assessment, teachers and teacher educators will find it easier to access the CEFR Companion volume as the updated framework" (CEFR, 2020, p.2).

This lesson plan can be a part of task-based syllabus. As students are taught to exact amount of language in accord with the activities they have to perform. Learners can have opportunity both practice and acquisition of target language, as "The positive advantages of task-based teaching are an articulated learning theory, learners' use of language for carrying out tasks with tangible outcomes, language integrated in the text-based activities and grammar analysed as a construct of particular tasks" (Mickan, 2012, p.21). Having considered students' needs, delivering of necessary language amount can be of more realistic than other method can do. It can be confused with situational teaching due to the language use in a specific setting, yet the latter one is a preparation of language to use in a specific situation in advance - a predefined product and the former is a supplementation of resources needed to completion of exact task - a process (Irfani, 2014). This lesson can be more of PPP model of approach, because students, first, are exposed to the input, then practice and finally be asked to produce. Also, focusing on the usage of CLT gives a rise to a positive atmosphere in classroom and interaction between students. In groups, higher-level students are likely to help lower-level ones, so lower-level students can take advantage of new input of their peers, being

corrected and aimed simultaneously. So, an element of Community language teaching is inserted into the lesson plan, as well.

While creating it, several aspects of developing a good lesson plan that can ensure accomplishment of lesson objectives were taken into consideration of course. Apparently, no lesson plan template specifically addresses ICQs and CCQs, yet Farrell (2002) mentioned in generic components of a lesson plan table that "Asks what students have learned" that means teachers ask some CCQs to make sure students' comprehension. Moreover, Ashcraft added "Did students appear to understand instructions for the activities? If not, how could instructions be made clearer?" (Ashcraft, 2014, p.22). ICQs/CCQs, thus, are addressed specifically so that students' understanding of instructions clearly can be ensured. Farrell (2002) mentioned about simulation as an activity that let students get prepared new activity and connect upcoming input with real life, so introducing of pre-activity can be essential to get students' attention with one attempt or get them acquainted what will happen next. In terms of instructional strategy Farrell puts emphasis on the instructions giving part that teachers should know what kind of instruction they give and how those instructions will be given (Farrell, 2002). Provision of instructional strategies, thus, matters, as Farrell (2002) argues that "Teachers plan for external reasons in order to satisfy the expectations of the principal or supervisor and to guide a substitute teacher in case the class needs one" (p.31). In case of main teacher are absent, the substitute teachers can be aware of every detail feature of lesson and how to instruct the class while students are doing activities.

As for time and class size, they are essential to take into consideration, as in accordance with dedicated time activities can be chosen and conducted, in accord with group size as well. Another concern is whether dedicated time is enough to acquire the language aspect and what if the class is huge, does everyone get interacted and have chance to produce the language. To cope with both group activities can be ideal to get engaged every student at one time. In Farrell's (2002) lesson plan sample prior knowledge of students is mentioned, because the input should be digestible for students not to unmotivate them, so that students can deal with the input and comprehend (Krashen, 1985). Chosen materials are level-based as well, so students get bored due to simplicity or complexity rarely.

In Ashcraft's lesson planning table, there are questions to be replied, such as "Did the learning activities allow learners to accomplish the learning objectives for this lesson?" (Ashcraft, 2014, p.22). Having provided accomplishment of learning objectives teacher can achieve students' intake of certain input, so each activity should be chosen attentively. For example, for reading, the chosen text helps increase students' comprehension and gives a chance to see how the topic relevant words work in context. After selecting activity to be involved in a lesson, next step is to deal with materials to make sure whether there are enough materials for all learners; there is necessity for use



of technology and teachers have knowledge of using them properly (Ashcraft, 2014). There are some activities that require use of technology in the lesson for sure, luckily all facilities are provided in our classrooms. Another main point is teachers' reflection of the class organization to identify the strengths and weaknesses of lesson conducted (Ashcraft, 2014), because by looking through once more how the lesson plan works in classroom helps instructors to decide more wisely about each aspect of planning.

First activity gives input for students to digest and see how the language works they are expected to learn, and then they practice together so that expected mistakes can be corrected on time and more chance to reconstruct the input can be supplied. Batstone (1994) mentioned that "Once having noticed something about the grammar, learners have to act on it, building it into their working hypothesis about how grammar is structured" (p.59). Not only grammar, but also content need to work on it to create clear picture of knowledge they learn. Finally, it is time to production, namely output. Although the last activity is more of semi-controlled task; students still can practice the language while discussing and making a story. The communicative purpose of the task let students' focus be on meaning and of course keeping the focus on form, as well (Thornbury, 1999). The provision of opportunities to utilise the demanded language in real-life situations, a set of examples to see how the language works and fluency orientation are the most advantages side of the activity.

In the activity 1 extra support method for lower-level students is chosen for differentiation, because in usual classrooms the discrepancies between students' knowledge diverges hugely. In state schools in case of Uzbekistan, English lessons are conducted thrice a week from the first grade to the last grade 11, so schoolers are exposed target language regularly. But in secondary classes, some students begin to attend extra language courses and some slow learners begin to fall behind in their studies. As a result, the classroom might turn out to be a place of chaos, as Tomlinson (2001) mentioned that "Grade-level texts are often far too simple for some students in a given class, and yet too complex for others" (p.75). But in my class all students take an exam before being directed to the group, for the difference in knowledge level occurs rarely. Yet, some learners acquire language relatively fast in comparison with others. Some slow learners, thus, should be supported on time not to let the discrepancy rise rapidly.

Tomlinson (2001) put focus on interest differentiation since it can ensure students feel heard and motivated. In activity 2, students can decide the implementation of the activity. Because in similar cases like that mostly higher-level students are eager to challenge themselves, this differentiation works for the sake of higher-level students.

### **Conclusion**

Considering students' need for language and allowing them practise the very amount may be the key for making classroom communicative for less, doubtlessly. There are other plenty of factors such as teacher talk, student engagement, and affective

factors that work with it directly. However, working on delivering appropriate language, level of input, adapting materials to students' needs, considering discrepancies between students' language aptitude and learning phase at least aims teachers in avoiding the classroom being a chaos, and creating a learner friendly atmosphere allowing students feel comfortable to express themselves in front of the class and build confidence to speak in public.

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