POLYCOPIÉS PÉDAGOGIQUES

Course Title: Didactics of English
Level: 2nd Year Master
Option: Didactics
Coef : 03
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1. About the Programme

This programme, entitled *Didactics of English*, is delivered to help 2nd year Master students of Didactics. It covers one semester. The purpose of this programme is to develop students' competencies of EFL teaching skills that are basic to successful instruction. Most of the lessons in this programme focus on foreign language teaching skills. The units in this programme show the students how to teach successfully and how to act effectively in EFL classroom contexts.

This programme is intended to help students, as future beginning teachers of English, blend theory with practice. It conceptualizes the effective EFL teacher as a reflective decision maker, one who makes planning, implementing, grouping, assessing, and evaluating. To make and carry out these decisions the teacher needs certain teaching skills. The conceptual framework of the successful EFL teacher is reflected in this programme. Each subsequent part addresses a particular unit with details.

Each unit has particular learning objectives as well as activities. Certainly, our general goal is to prepare students to be effective teachers and to help them acquire the skills of teaching by providing them with instructional materials which are important, scientific-based, flexible, readable, and practicable. Indeed, the teaching skills included in this programme have been recognized by many research studies and by best-practices literature as being *important* to the success of teachers. Studies of professional teachers prove that these skills are necessary to effective EFL teaching.

In brief, our aim is to help EFL students master practical instructional skills that enable them to assume successfully their classroom responsibilities. It is our belief that these instructional lessons can be retained and used by most students in the future.

2. **The Main Objectives of the Programme**

   This programme is aimed to attain the following objectives:

   ✓ Describing and explaining the nature and the advantages of reflective teaching.

   ✓ Explaining how to practice reflective teaching.

   ✓ Identifying and describing the autonomous learning.

   ✓ Providing suggestions for enhancing learners' autonomy.

   ✓ Providing a literature review about motivation.

   ✓ Illustrating some motivational strategies.

   ✓ Describing the different types of students' grouping.

   ✓ Showing leaners how to conduct group-work and pair-work activities.

   ✓ Describing the steps, elements, and formats of a lesson plan.

   ✓ Helping learners to make their own lesson plans.

   ✓ Illuminating the importance of textbook use in the teaching-learning process.

   ✓ Explaining how to evaluate, analyse, and use an ELT textbook.

   ✓ Identifying and describing the Competency-based Approach and the Competency-based language teaching.

   ✓ Defining assessment and evaluation.

   ✓ Illustrating the advantages of assessment.

   ✓ Illustrating the types, stages, and tools of assessment.

Domain: Didactics

Module: Didactics of English

Class: Master 2, Didactics

Unit 1: Reflective Teaching

Objectives:

1. Describing and explaining the nature and the advantages of reflective teaching.

2. Explaining how to practice reflective teaching.

1. What is Reflection?

Reflection is an activity or process in which an experience is recalled and evaluated for a particular purpose. It involves an examination and evaluation of a past experience and making decisions for future planning and action.

Dewey (2001) defines reflection as a systematic process of decision making to solve problems. It refers to the process or the activity in which an experience is recalled, reconsidered, and judged for superior purposes. Dewey (1933) considers reflection as a habit which involves teachers' inclination and readiness to engage in a constant self-reviewing and professional development. Reflective thinking is an active and persistent process that is based on logic and that leads to concrete actions that can modify and improve the existing practice on the bases of learned experience.

Further, reflection can be seen as a valuable teaching approach as teachers are committed to observe, criticise, evaluate, review, and improve their practices. According to Bartlett (1990), reflection requires teachers to ask "what, why, and how" questions in order to exercise a certain level of control over their teaching practices and develop their decision-making skills. Many scholars view that

reflection on the teaching practices helps teachers understand and update their instructional contents.

Reflection helps teachers ponder about their plans, learn from their experience, reconsider their actions, and make their past an asset for their future. A reflective teacher may think about:

> ➢ An event when thinks went badly and incorrect.
> ➢ A situation which was hard to control.
> ➢ Learners' failure to assimilate the lesson.
> ➢ Learners' low performance.

2. About Reflective Teaching

Reflective teaching plays significant roles in developing teacher's professional performance. It is defined as a cognitive, thoughtful, and self-inquiry process through which teachers can analyse, assess, and review their classroom instruction. It is a cyclic system towards a high quality teaching practice (Wilson and Jan, 1993; Jay and Johnson, 2002).

Schon (1983) views that reflective teaching practice is a continuous process and involves novice or future teachers considering their own experiences and applying knowledge to practice while being trained by professionals. More, reflective teaching entails teachers' thinking and rethinking about their performance before, during and after classroom activities. It includes reflecting about the achievement of the teaching goals, about the teaching strategies, and about learners 'problems (Artzt, Curcio, Gural, and Thomas, 2015)

Definitely, teachers are considered as the basic assets to the whole teaching-learning process as they transmit knowledge, skills, and values. In fact, the quality of education is related to the quality of teachers. Thus, teachers who reflect on their practices can take a conscious look at their actions, experiences, responses and use this evidence to corroborate their existing knowledge and to reach higher levels of understanding and performance.

Research recommends that teachers are much more required to question their instructional plans, practices, and achievements in order to increase their students' attainments When teachers go through a self-inquiry process, they can understand themselves, monitor their classroom practices and actions, and evaluate their achievements. Indeed, reflective teaching implies that teachers can learn from their experiences and reach personal professional development. According to Ur (1999), the most important factor for teachers' professional progress is simply their own reflection on daily classroom events. Certainly, reflecting on ones' actions leads to continuous learning and produces autonomous, qualified, and self-monitored professionals.

Dewey (1933) lists the following characteristics of reflective teaching:

- ➢ Reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency.
- ➢ Reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical process, in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously.
- ➢ Reflective teaching requires competence in methods of evidence‑based classroom enquiry, to support the progressive development of higher standards of teaching.
- ➢ Reflective teaching requires attitudes of open‑mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness.
- ➢ Reflective teaching is based on teacher judgement, informed by evidence‑based enquiry and insights from other research.
- ➢ Reflective teaching enables teachers to creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning.

Indeed, reflectivity is not something that comes naturally, but is a teaching skill that can be acquired and developed. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged and inspired to practice reflection before, while, and after the session takes place. In sum, reflective teaching can be seen as a process through which teachers think over their teaching actions, analyse how content was taught, and how the practice might be bettered or reformed for better learning results.

Reflective teaching requires competence in methods of gathering evidence to support the progressive development of higher standards of teaching:

- ➢ *Gathering evidence skills*: This relates to the essential issue of knowing what is going on in a classroom or school. It is concerned with collecting data, describing situations, processes, causes and effects with care and accuracy.

- ➢ *Analytical skills:* These skills are needed to address the issue of how to interpret descriptive data. Such 'facts' are not meaningful until they are placed in a framework that enables a reflective teacher to relate them one with the other and to begin to theorize about them.

- ➢ *Evaluative skills:* Evaluative skills are involved in making judgements about the events and the classroom happenings. The results of an enquiry to be applied to future planning and practice.

3. Reflection and Decision-Making

Researchers make the distinction between *reflection-on-action* and *reflection-in- action* (Shon, 1983). The former refers to thinking about the total outcome of the activity and the later involves the actions and the reactions during an activity. *Reflection-on-action* happens when planning for a lesson or in thinking about a lesson that has already been presented. This kind of reflection is more restful and less demanding of an immediate response. *Reflection-in-action* takes place during the teaching of a lesson, often demanding an instantaneous response and a swift decision making.

More, educators strongly recommend teachers to reflect on the moral and ethical issues and take appropriate decisions that actually undergird their teaching. This involves ethical decisions about the examples they give, the historical and literary events they recall, and the way they treat their learners. Indeed, we cannot teach without making ethical decisions.

Within the reflective process and the instructional roles they play, teachers must take correct decisions related to three main functions: planning, (2) implementing , and (3) evaluating.

a/ Planning: The *planning* phase requires teachers to make decisions about:

- ➢ Their students' needs.
- ➢ The goals and objectives to help meet those needs.
- ➢ The content to be taught.
- ➢ The instructional techniques and strategies that help attain the goals.

While planning, teachers have time to reflect and consider the content, the objectives, the teaching materials, and the time requirements of the activities.

b/ Implementing

In this phase, teachers are required to implement the decisions that were made in the planning stage, particularly those related to the instructional goals and the techniques and strategies. The implementation act occurs when teachers face their learners as they are required to make rapid and appropriate decisions in response to the classroom happenings. In order to make and implement the decisions appropriately, teachers need to acquire and practice the teaching skills of introducing, presenting, demonstrating, explaining, listening, responding to questions, questioning, and providing constructive feedback.

c/ Evaluating

In this last step, teachers are required to see whether the objectives were attained or not. They need to evaluate the workability of the selected strategies in order to make the necessary adjustments for future planning. For this function, teachers need to acquire and practice the skills of, describing information, analysing and interpreting evidence, making judgments, and refining instruction.

4. Tools of Reflective Teaching

The process of reflection can take place through the following ways:

4.1 Written Accounts

One useful way of engaging in the reflective process is through the use of written accounts of experiences. Personal accounts of experiences through writing are common in other disciplines and their potential is increasingly being recognized in teacher education. Teachers can register the happenings and the issues they face in the classroom. After each session, they can note in a notebook the difficulties, the obstacles, students' reactions, time managements, and all events that are important to their teaching practice. A number of various approaches can be used:

4.1.1 Journal Writing

A procedure which is becoming more widely acknowledged as a valuable tool for developing critical reflection is the journal or diary. The goal of journal writing is to provide a record of the significant learning experiences that have taken place and to provide teachers with an opportunity to express, in a personal and dynamic way, their self-development.

While procedures for diary keeping vary, the teacher usually keeps a regular account of teaching experiences, recording reflections on what he/she did as well as straightforward descriptions of events, which may be used as a basis for later reflection.

4.1.2 Self-Reporting

Self-reporting involves completing an inventory or checklist in which the teacher indicates which teaching practices were used within a lesson or within a specified time period and how good they were employed. Self-reporting allows teachers to make a regular assessment of what they are doing in the classroom. They can see to what extent their actual teaching practices are successful. For example, a teacher can use self-reporting to find out the types of teaching activities being used, whether curriculum objectives and requirements are fulfilled, the degree to which personal goals for a class are being attained , and the kinds of activities which seem to work well or unwell.

4.1.3 Portfolios

Portfolios are aimed to include and keep tests, lesson plans, student work, and other materials that afford a record of teachers' professional experiences and performance. When reviewing the portfolios, teachers can reflect on their instructional practices, recognise areas of strengths and weaknesses, and make modifications and changes.

4.2 Collaboration with Colleagues; Peer Observation

Dialogue with colleagues is necessary to enhance teachers' performance. Peers can share experiences, check and observe performance, reveal weaknesses and strengths, correct mistakes, adjust instruction, and provide advice.

Collaborative reflection would help teachers develop dialogues, raise awareness, identify deficits, illuminate feelings, assess practice, express moods and ideas, exchange information, seek solutions, set recommendations, build up knowledge, and develop personal skills. One can cite the following advantages of collaborative reflection:

> ➢ Reflective teaching, professional learning, and personal fulfilment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues.
> ➢ The value of engaging in reflective activity is almost always enhanced if it can be carried out in association with other colleagues, be they trainees, teaching assistants, teachers, or tutors.
> ➢ Wherever and whenever it occurs, collaborative reflective discussion capitalizes on the social nature of learning.
> ➢ Aims are clarified, experiences are shared, language and concepts for analysing practice are refined, the personal insecurities of innovation are reduced, evaluation becomes reciprocal, and commitments are affirmed.

Teachers can invite one or two colleagues to observe their class to collect information about their performance. They can be asked to observe and note certain points such as the classroom interactions, teacher's feedback and reactions, and teacher's way of lesson presentation. Peer observation can provide

opportunities for teachers to view each other's classroom practices so as they can highlight the teaching styles and raise opportunities for criticism and amendment. So, the following guidelines can be followed in a peer observation project:

➤ Each teacher should observe and be observed. A teacher can invite his/her colleagues to observe him/her. They can work in pairs or in groups.

➤ Planning and deciding about the observation session. The observers should determine what exactly the points they are going to observe such as; classroom interaction, the material, the way of explanation, reaction to problem behaviour, and the teaching strategies. The observed teacher can set the goals and elements to be observed. Yet, the observers can gather clear evidence about the aspects of the lesson being taught. It is important that the observation session should be arranged and scheduled.

➤ Setting post-observation meeting as the observers meet after the session in order to report and discuss the necessary information with the observed teacher. For example, they can discuss different issues such as; classroom management, time management, the organisation of the lesson, teacher's questions and learners' answers, teacher's correction of learners' mistakes, use of L1 and L2, the shift from one activity to another, and group and pair work management.

Obviously, this strategy of reflection helps teachers obtain new visions and perceptions about the various teaching aspects. Many teachers revealed that reflection with peers:

➤ Provided them with the necessary information about their classroom performance as well as their learners' performance during class that they cannot discover by their own.

➤ Helped them know useful information about pair work and group work monitoring.

➤ Made them conscious about the most useful teaching strategies to be used.

➤ Made them aware about time management.

➢ Led them to change and improve their teaching strategies.

➢ More importantly, it helped them develop good relationships with colleagues.

4.3 Recording Lessons

Audio and video recordings of the teaching practices can provide valuable evidence for reflection. Through watching their video recordings, teachers can develop their awareness of teaching. Indeed, this would help them reflect on their actions as they can see their behaviours, errors, explanations, how much they talk and about what, how well they stand, how clear they speak and respond to learners, and many other aspects.

For many aspects of teaching, audio or video recording of lessons can also provide a basis for reflection. While there are many useful insights to be gained from diaries and self-reports, they cannot capture the moment to moment processes of teaching. Many things happen simultaneously in a classroom, and some aspects of a lesson cannot be recalled.

4.4 Research

Making research is one of the tools of reflective teaching. In fact, teachers can identify and solve their classroom problems and improve their instruction through conducting research. They can ask questions, build up hypotheses, seek solutions, relate findings, and draw conclusions.

Reviewing relevant, existing research is necessary to learn as much as possible from others. Published research on the issue of concern, from teachers or from professional researchers, may be reviewed. Internet‑based search techniques make this an increasingly straightforward task, as do other resources.

5. Advantages of Reflective Teaching

- Reflective teaching is a cyclic and recurrent process which helps teachers succeed in their professional domain as they can develop knowledge, identify problems, understand practice, gain experience, bring changes, renovate instruction, take decisions, eliminate inadequacies, and achieve professional growth.
- It helps teachers overcome their weaknesses and get them to seek and implement the most useful teaching strategies and methodologies to develop and improve their instructional performance.
- Only through reflection, teachers can vary, amend, and refine their instructional practices; yet, improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Reflective teaching leads teachers to plan, apply, and ameliorate their practices through reconsidering and rethinking their instructional performance.
- Reflective practice help teachers develop different skills such as critical thinking.
- Reflection is the process by which teachers can build personal and empirical knowledge and continue to learn and improve their teaching.

6. Conclusion

Reflective teaching is a recurrent and cyclic process. It refers to teachers' habits and techniques of examining and assessing their teaching on regular bases. It involves using the skills of observation, analyses, interpretation, and decision-making. More importantly, the reflective teaching approach requires teachers to have willingness and readiness to criticise their own practice, to evaluate their outcomes, and to endeavour for perfection and improvement.

Actually, in the present time, teaching has become much more specific, competitive, and goal- oriented. Therefore, only reflective teachers can meet these global requirements.

7. Activities

1. Why is reflection important for effective teaching to occur?

2. How can portfolios help EFL teachers record and assess their teaching practices?

3. What other strategies do you suggest for EFL teachers to promote reflective teaching?

4. Reflection and decision-making skills are interrelated. Explain.

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1.   Introduction

Learning autonomy has not been given clear guidelines and objectives in most educational programmes. Most of teachers are not really equipped with the theories and the strategies that help them foster the autonomous learning. Most of the time, teachers themselves do not know much about the concept of autonomy, much less about how to practice it in the teaching-learning process.

Besides, autonomous learning is confronted with many constraints such as inexperienced learners and teachers, time limitations, exam obligations, and curriculum requirements.

2. Autonomous Learning Defined

According to Oxford (1990),   the term autonomy refers to the learner's attitudes. Learners who can play active and positive roles in their own learning can be described as autonomous learners. According to Benson and Voller (1997), autonomous learning refers to students' abilities to assume their responsibilities for their own learning. Other researchers have viewed that autonomy involves various kinds of abilities that make learners plan their learning, assess their weakness and strengths, and monitor their progress. According to Benson:

Autonomy is perhaps best described as a capacity … because various kinds of abilities can be involved in control over learning. Researchers generally agree that the most important abilities are those that allow learners to plan their own learning activities, monitor their progress and evaluate their outcomes.

(Benson, 2003: 290)

In other words, learner's autonomy is strongly related learner's ability to make effective contribution to his/her own learning by planning, controlling, and evaluating. Benson and Voller (1997) argue that the term autonomy can be used in the following contexts:

➢ For contexts where students learn totally on their own.
➢ For a variety of skills which can be learnt and applied in self-directed learning.
➢ For an instinctive ability which is not scaffolded by the school.
➢ For the right of learners to decide the progression of their own learning.

Autonomous learning includes learners' abilities to select and discuss the learning material, to reflect on their own learning, to make self-assessment, and to make decisions about learning. Further, they should be able to take their responsibilities to set the   learning goals and to decide about the appropriate methods and techniques. In other words, autonomy can be viewed as the ability for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action.

Benson (2001) defines language learning autonomy as the role of the students' approach in their own learning. He views that autonomy in language learning is not intrinsic but can be seen as a natural tendency as it takes different forms and characteristics. According to Holec (1981),   autonomy in language learning refers to students' abilities to assume their responsibilities   in   learning and their ability to do   the following points:

➢ Setting objectives and goals.

- ➢ Selecting the contents.

- ➢ Deciding about the methods and techniques.

- ➢ Monitoring learning.

- ➢ Assessing and evaluating.

According to Carr (1999) and Derrick (2001) autonomous learning occurs through the following stream:

- ➢ *Desire*; which refers to learners' preparedness to be autonomous.

- ➢ *Resourcefulness*; which refers to learners' ability to search for the appropriate resources such as the learning materials, staff, and environment that help them improve their learning.

- ➢ *Initiative*; which refers to students' ability to take initiatives in their learning.

In addition, according to Dornyei (2011), autonomy in the learning contexts refers to learner's self-regulation in learning. In this sense, Wenden (1991: 15) argues:

> *Autonomous learners are learners who learn how to learn to acquire the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately, and independently of a teacher.*

> (Wenden, 1991: 15).

Indeed, autonomy in learning has always been related to the concepts of independence and self- direction in learning. Researchers identify autonomy as an essential aim for learning. It could take different forms according to the learning contexts, the contents to be taught, and learners' styles and characteristics. Still, Dickinson (1987:11) identifies autonomy as: ***"the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the***

implementation of those decisions". In other words, autonomy involves learners' abilities to take and implement decisions about learning.

Further, Cotterall (1995) provides pedagogical, philosophical, and practical *assumptions* for language learning autonomy. As for the pedagogical view, learners should feel safe in their learning by giving them the opportunity to make contributions in selecting the learning contents and the strategies. The philosophical assumption views that learners should make choices in their learning. The practical argument says that teachers are not always available to help students learn on their own. According to Little (1991), autonomy:

- ➢ Is not a teaching approach, but a teaching strategy that teachers can apply.
- ➢ Is not a synonym for self-instruction.
- ➢ Does not mean learning without a teacher.
- ➢ Does not mean letting students learn alone and do things as they want.
- ➢ Is not about teachers' resignation from their teaching and educational responsibilities.

3. Increasing Learners' Autonomy

Researchers and educationalists have accorded a significant importance to the practice of autonomy in learning because of its essential roles in the educational contexts. Indeed, encouraging students to be more autonomous in their learning has become a great challenge and concern for many researchers, educationalists, and teachers in recent times. Researchers and academics are seeking the most effective methods and strategies that can actually lead to enhance autonomous learning.

Undoubtedly, there are numerous factors that can enhance or impair the learning autonomy such as motivation, learners' gender, learners' age, learners' attitudes, and learners' level. One of the challenges that weaken the increase of students' autonomy is learners' unwillingness to take responsibility in learning. In fact, they have had the tendency to depend greatly on their teachers. Therefore,

teachers who want to enhance their students' autonomy must motivate them to take part in their learning and stop spoon-feeding them.

In the field of the English Language Teaching, EFL teachers are much more required to seek and implement plans and use the useful techniques that could develop learners' abilities to be autonomous. One of these strategies is helping learners acquire the skills that make them set clear goals for their learning. Nunan (2003) provides the following suggestions to enhance learners' autonomy:

➢ Raising awareness of the learning process.
➢ Making the learning objectives clear to students.
➢ Providing learners with the opportunities to set their learning objectives.
➢ Encouraging students to reveal their preferences and their learning styles.
➢ Encouraging students to make their own decisions and make their choices about their own learning.
➢ Involving students in setting the classroom activities.
➢ Encouraging students to be researchers.

Clearly, both EFL teachers and learners need to know that autonomy is the ability that can be prompted and developed through appropriate preparation. Teachers need to share their decisions with their students and set a clear framework to enhance this autonomy. They must assure that students are playing important roles in their learning and have the tendency to learn beyond the classroom contexts.

Furthermore, EFL teachers need to restrict their roles in spoon-feeding language skills. They should try to deal with students as social individuals. Certainly, they should take into consideration their age, their abilities and skills, the instructional objectives, and the curriculum requirements. For example, adult students are more likely able to assume responsibilities in their learning, yet helping the teachers to increase autonomous learning.

As teachers should act sociologically, they should help learners build their personalities as free social individuals who are able to take decisions in their lives. In fact, personal autonomy and learning autonomy are strongly related. Since, autonomy is something that can be acquired, EFL teachers should play significant roles in building in parallel their learners' both personal and learning autonomy.

Certainly, EFL teachers should take into consideration learners' personal autonomy because it is the key to   learning autonomy. According to Crabbe (1993),   the ideological argument for autonomous learning refers to the learners' right to be free to make their own choices and preferences in learning and in other settings. In other words, learning autonomy is part of personal autonomy.

Learners can assume their responsibility for their learning if they are efficiently trained about how they learn independently. For example, in planning instruction, teachers need to include tasks and strategies   that push students to make efforts autonomously and which assure the continuous non-classroom learning. Indeed, they should make a shift from giving information to requiring and encouraging learners to seek and find information by themselves. Actually, if learners are effectively trained to learn independently, they will be accustomed to be autonomous learners.

Harmer (2007) and Benson (2001) state the following techniques to enhance learners' autonomy:

> ➤ Displaying positive attitudes towards students.
> ➤ Enhancing student's personal autonomy before focusing on the learning autonomy.
> ➤ Asking learners to identify their learning goals.
> ➤ Asking learners to make research and select the materials to be taught.
> ➤ Increasing the degree of freedom in the classroom.
> ➤ Demanding students to conduct projects.
> ➤ Requiring students to make free readings.

- ➢ Asking students to prepare and make plans and to give suggestions and recommendations for forthcoming lessons.
- ➢ Asking learners to give their opinions and views about the teaching material.
- ➢ Encouraging self-assessment and self-reflection.
- ➢ Appreciating and rewarding students' initiatives and contributions in learning.
- ➢ Involving students in classroom decisions.
- ➢ Pushing learners to reveal their needs and interests.
- ➢ Motivating students.

In addition, some educationalists view that for learning autonomy to take place; autonomous teaching should be enhanced and practiced. Autonomous teaching refers to teachers' abilities to use new strategies to achieve the instructional goals. Certainly, when teachers enjoy a high degree of freedom in setting their instructional goals and implementing their own methods, they are more likely able to increase learners' autonomy. Of course, if teachers themselves are not autonomous, they can never develop autonomous learning. In short, the autonomous learner is the product of the autonomous teacher.

4. Conclusion

Autonomy is a continuous process where both teachers and learners shouldn't cease to learn to be autonomous. The rationale behind the increasing interest about learning autonomy is the emergence of critical views and studies about the importance of autonomy and its roles in improving the leaning process.

Many scholars have argued that giving a certain degree of freedom to learners is necessary for better learning to occur. Researchers have attempted to clarify and refine the concept and the effects of autonomy in order to make a balance between the teacher-centred and the learner-centred approaches to education.

5. Activities

1. Do you think that autonomy is necessary for EFL learning?
2. How can autonomous learning enhance the teaching of English as a foreign language?
3. Do you think that autonomous learning is useful for building students' self-reflecting skills? Explain.
4. What other strategies do you suggest to increase learners' autonomy?

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Domain: Didactics

Module: Didactics of English

Class: Master 2, Didactics

Unit 3: Motivation

Objectives:

    1.Providing a literature review about motivation.

    2. Illustrating some motivational strategies.

1. Introduction

Motivation is a very essential element for successful learning. In fact, both teachers and learners need to have strong willingness to do something in order to succeed at it. Without motivation, we may fail to achieve our purposes in learning.

Motivation can be seen as a process rather than an aim. It is an instrument that helps realise the goals. As far as ELT is concerned, motivation plays significant roles in improving language learning for itt creates interest for learners, gives reasons for learning, and provides directions.

2. Motivation Defined

Motivation is an important issue in language learning. According to Williams and Burden (1997), motivation can be defined as a cognitive and emotional   stimulation which could result in conscious decisions and actions which require   intellectual and physical efforts to reach certain objectives.

According to Weiner (1992) in (Wlodkowski, 1999), motivation is the concept which tells the reasons behind thinking and acting. With regard to classroom contexts, (Brophy,1998: 3)   argues: ***In the classroom context, the***

concept of student motivation is used to explain the degree to which students invest attention and effort in various pursuits"

As it is obvious, motivation constitutes one of the significant backbones of the learning process in student life; hence a lot of studies place a high value on this concept.

Absence of motivation is one of the main challenges to both EFL teachers and learners. Research has revealed that lack of confidence, lack of competence, anxiety, teachers' attitudes, the teaching styles and methods, classroom atmosphere, and students' attitudes towards the subject matter are the main factors that could lead to the lack of motivation. Therefore, teachers need to play significant roles in raising motivation by offering supportive and productive learning environment and facilitating the development of students' motivational thinking (McDonough, 2007).

Burden and Williams (1997) view that motivation is a state of cognitive excitement that drives someone to take decisions to act, and eventually, making intellectual, and physical efforts to achieve a certain pre-set goal. So, the degree or the strength of that motivation depend extremely on the amount of value given to the result to be achieved.

As for the types of motivation, Harmer (2001) defines both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as follows:

> *Extrinsic motivation is caused by any number of outside factors, for example the need to pass an exam, the hope for financial reward, or the possibility of future travel. Intrinsic motivation, by contrast, comes from within the individual. Thus a person might be motivated by the enjoyment of the learning process itself or by a desire to make themselves feel better.*

Harmer (2001: 51)

According to Harmer, intrinsic motivation is a kind of internal drive which lead someone to do things in order to achieve something, while extrinsic motivation is triggered by external factors.

2.1 Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is an essential factor for improving EFL learning. It refers to the student's readiness to act on specific tasks with enjoyment and without any external pressure. This kind of motivation leads learners to work on a specific activity, become excited to do it, and continue until they realize it successfully without the recompenses.

This type of motivation functions when learners strive eagerly to do and complete the task. Indeed, research has revealed many advantages of intrinsic motivation, in fact; learners who possess this motivation at early ages are likely to continue and succeed in their higher studies and do better in foreign language learning.

2.2 Extrinsic Motivation

According to Dornyei (1998), extrinsic motivation refers to the kind of motivation that learners have in order to act on specific tasks without delight but to attain some external goals. Research has revealed that learners who have extrinsic motivation cannot develop positive attitudes towards L2 learning and cannot achieve long-term goals.

Extrinsic motivation helps learners to pass an exam, to get a mark, or to achieve an academic degree. Indeed, when the motivation to learn a foreign language is all about marks and academic grades, learning becomes less useful. Studies have shown that the lack of intrinsic motivation is due to the learning obligations imposed by the curriculum requirements and the standardized test and exams.

3. Factors Affecting Students' Motivation

In the field of EFL learning, researchers have described various sources of motivation. Harmer (2001) lists the following factors that could affect students' motivation:

➢ *Teachers*: They play significant roles in maintaining learners' motivation. The attitude of the teacher towards the subject and the learners is very important. Indeed, a teacher who shows enthusiasm for the English language learning tasks would be a very motivating teacher. Its worthy of reminding that one of the roles of a teacher is a motivator.

➢ *The Teaching Methodology*: the methods and the strategies used by teachers have a direct effect on increasing or reducing students' motivation. So, effective and comfortable methods should be well-thought-out.

➢ *Other Factors:* The society we live in has direct and indirect effects on foreign language learning motivation. English learning in some societies has a priority due to its global status. Further, parents play significant roles in increasing or decreasing the degree of their children's motivation. More, peers' attitudes towards English learning can also affect positively or negatively in sustaining students' motivation.

4. Sustaining Students' Motivation

In the Algerian EFL contexts, motivation is not easy to sustain. For example, parents do not   speak English nor do they have views about the target language culture and community. Yet, putting extra challenges on EFL teachers who are obliged to encourage learners and increase their enjoyment in learning the target language. Further, learning English is not the same as learning another subject in the school and learners could not receive the necessary help and support from parents or family members; yet, the lack of involvement and the lack of motivation can be caused. Therefore, the EFL teacher must play significant roles in enhancing learners' motivation by assuming full responsibility in the classroom.

According to Harper (2007), students should take their responsibilities in improving their motivation by showing willingness to learning. In their turn,

teachers need to prepare their lessons in a way that attracts students' attentions. They need to be aware of their roles in the classroom. For example, Glasser (2001) thinks that teachers should not act as workers in the classroom but as modern managers in order to create a good learning environment. Furthermore, they should acquire inspirational skills in order to increase enthusiasm and stimulate learning by helping learners overcome their psychological barriers.

Gardner and Lambert (1959) view that motivation to foreign language learning can be increased by developing positive attitudes towards the foreign language goals and towards the native speakers. In this respect, they revealed two brands of motivation; *instrumental and integrative*. The former means that learners could acquire the desire and the aspiration to have future benefits from the foreign language learning such as applying for jobs and improving careers. The later refers to learners' willingness to interact with the L2 community and becoming part of it. According to Gardner and Lambert (1959), learners who have the integrative motivation are more successful in foreign language learning than those who are instrumentally motivated.

In order to sustain students' motivation, teachers can use the following strategies:

> *Setting valid and reliable goals for learners*: Since an individual's motivation is bound to achieving a goal, teachers are required to explain to their learners' long-term goals for learning English such as; getting better jobs in the future, as well as short-term goals such as; improving the communicative and the writing skills, or succeeding in the exam.

> *Establishing good learning Atmosphere:* Teachers need to make their classrooms a nice place for learning and enjoyment. Indeed, the good physical appearance of the classroom attract learners and increases their motivation for learning. Besides, the teachers' physical appearance and presence, the way they react to misbehaviours, and the emotional, psychological and ethical support and examples they give are all factors that can make the learning atmosphere more motivating and productive.

> *Selecting Interesting topics and materials:* If we want our learners to be intrinsically motivated, we have to offer extrinsic motivation through selecting good teaching materials, interesting topics, appropriate activities, and a variety of techniques and strategies.

5. Conclusion

Over decades, researchers have been attempting to reveal useful motivational strategies and techniques that could encourage students to learn a foreign language. Indeed, without motivation, learners cannot accomplish their learning aims. Therefore, one of the teachers' responsibilities is to increase students' motivation. However, it is important to note that motivation is the concern of both teachers and learners and it depends on both attitudes.

6. Activities

1. Are there any other types of motivation? If yes, illustrate them with explanation.

2. What other strategies do you suggest to increase EFL learners' motivation?

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Unit 4:   Students' Grouping

Objectives:

1. **Describing the different types of students' grouping.**
2. **Showing leaners how to conduct group-work and pair-work activities.**

Introduction

EFL teachers can group learners in different ways in the classroom. They can teach a class as whole group, in pairs, or in small groups according to the type of activity. However, sometimes teachers can face some obstacles such as over-crowded classes, learners' preferences and attitudes, and fix furniture. Researchers list the following types of students' grouping:

1. Whole-Class Grouping

This type of grouping means having learners sitting in rows listening to their teacher standing in front of them.

1.1 Strengths of Whole-Class Grouping

➢ It is preferred by many educationalist, teachers, and learners because it provide security to learners as they work in a whole group under the authority of the teacher.

➢ It is easy to organise and to manage.

➢ It helps teachers reinforce the sense of belonging among class members.

➢ It is easier for the teacher to control the whole class than controlling small groups. Less discipline problems.

- ➢ It is effective for giving instructions and explanations.
- ➢ It is good when using materials and equipment such as data-shows, tapes, pictures, maps…
- ➢ It is good for assessing learners   and getting a general understanding of their achievements.

1.2 Weaknesses of Whole-Class Grouping

- ➢ Learners are obliged to do the same activity at the same time.
- ➢ Not all learners have the opportunity to participate and to express their ideas.
- ➢ Fear of public failure.
- ➢ It does not help learners to hold their responsibilities to enhance their own learning.
- ➢ It supports direct knowledge transmission from the teacher to learners. They are not actively encouraged to learn by themselves.
- ➢ It is not good for developing communicative abilities. Communication between thirty or forty individuals is difficult. Less learner-learner interaction, more teacher-learner interaction.

2. Pair-Work

Research has revealed that learners can acquire language skills and improve their competence in a collaborative environment. Indeed, they can successfully perform some learning tasks which cannot be done individually. Pair work can be simply defined as a teaching strategy that gets one learner to work with another learner to do a classroom activity.

Theories, methods, and approaches (such as the Communicative approach and the Task-based Learning, the Cooperative learning Approach) have highlighted the pair work utility in   L2 teaching. Indeed, students can attain far better learning achievements in a collaborative atmosphere. Pair work is useful when we want our learners to practise the target language, to read and analyse a text, to write a dialogue or an interview, or to listen and compare notes.

Pair work is defined as a learning activity which implicates learners working in pairs. Storch (2005) views that the use of pair work in foreign language learning is based on some theoretical perspectives. He believes that the concept of pair work relates to social constructivist theories of learning. This view considers that the development of humans is affected by surrounding social activities. In the same sense, Vygotsky (1978) talks about his socio-cultural theory and argues that learners' cognitive processes are developed through interaction with people.

Krashen (1982) says that involving learners in continuous interaction process helps them obtain the skills of real life communication and also enable them to interact successfully in different social contexts. Indeed, pair work develops learners' communicative abilities and provide them with communicative opportunities. More, through pair work, learners make efforts to achieve common goals by working together.

Some Researchers have mentioned several types of pair work activities; role-plays dialoguing, information gap activities, conversational activities, and problem solving activities. The aim of pair work task is to develop learners' critical thinking and make them communicate freely and extensively. They should learn how to think, analyse, synthesise, evaluate, solve problems, and make decisions through pair work tasks.

2.1 Strengths of Pair work

➢ Harmer (2001) views that learners can successfully do various task when they are put in pairs. For example, pair-work involves brainstorming and predicting activities before and after reading or listening. More, pair work can include communicative activities such as interviewing, discussing, and dialoguing.

➢ According to Jones (2007), pair work is more protective and private than whole class or group work tasks. It makes students less retrovert, more extrovert and friendly as they can exchange ideas and share experiences

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➢ Pair work enhances cooperative learning, increases STT and provokes learner-learner interaction.

➢ Moon (2000) views that pair work as a strategy to organise learners in ways that provides copious opportunities for good learning. Certainly, working in pairs enhances learner-learner interaction and aims to upsurge their L2 learning and production.

➢ It is a famous strategy in EFL learning that can be used to promote communicative practice and negotiating meaning.

➢ According to Nunan (2003), pair work can be used to increase the amount of time that students spend to communicate in L2 during lessons.

➢ It enhances learners' autonomy and develops a sense of independent learning.

➢ It is easy to organise.

➢ It provides language exposure and offers opportunities for learners to use and communicate in L2. So, learners feel at ease in expressing their ideas in the target language.

2.2 Problems with Pair-Work Activities

➢ Learners can use L1 during the pair work activity.

➢ The good learners dominate the task and do it alone while the shy and weak learners remain silent.

➢ It causes classroom management and misbehaviour problems as teachers find difficulties in maintaining discipline. According to Harmer (2001), learners could diverge from the main topic of the activity and start talking about other topics (sport, social media,..). Indeed, this would create misbehaviour and lead to ineffective learning.

➢ It create anxiety among some learners. (those who prefer whole class learning).

➢ Successful interaction depends on the nature of relations with peers (friendship, closeness..). Problems occur when partners are incompatible and uncongenial (unfriendly)

➢ Discussing other topics rather than focusing on the task.

➢ Teachers cannot assess effectively learners abilities and skills.

➢ Hadfield (1992) views that pair work can be destructive activity in many ways. It fragments the class and creates a sense of distinctions, division, and struggle.

➢ Working in pairs can lead to some communicative problems when some communicatively competent learners get to interact with other low learners.

3. Group-Work

Teaching a foreign language through group work is a challenging task for EFL teachers. Sometimes, we need to put students in groups of five or six member to perform some tasks that cannot be done individually or in pairs. Learners can prepare a presentation, a role-paly, or write a story. They can be asked to reorder or reassemble a dialogue or an interview and present it. According to Ur (1990), a Group-Work activity can include discussions, debates, role plays, problem-solving tasks, creating stories, creating an interview, information gap activities, games, planning a trip, or writing a petition.

Brown (2001) defines group work as a general term that covers a variety of techniques in which two or more learners are asked to do a task collaboratively. Learners are asked to work together in small groups where every individual or member should take part in the task and be aware of his/her role and responsibility.

Assigning students to work in groups aims at providing learners with more practice in L2. Indeed, through group work activities, learners are expected to ask and answer questions, make suggestions, and give feedback. These functions, which are normally reserved for the teacher, enhance learners' L2 practice. More, group work enhances peer interaction and gets learners to negotiate meaning. They can work together on the task by sharing knowledge and helping each other to solve linguistic problems. Kagan (1994) affirms that the success of every group depends on the success of every member in the group. Indeed, when all members

work together, they will have the opportunity to learn from one another by generating and discussing new ideas and exchange information.

Researchers recommend that groups should be small in size (five learners or fewer) in order to allow learners use what they know and what they have learnt when doing the group work activity. To assure better involvement and participation and incite better interaction, small groups of five member are more efficient than larger groups. Larger groups are useful if we want to divide the class into teams for some specific activities. Certainly, flexible and effective grouping helps learners make academic progress and fosters their learning skills and abilities. Indeed, Group Work provides regular learner-learner interaction and offers opportunities for learners to learn from one another

Kowal and Swain (1994) view that pairing or grouping learners of different levels and abilities may lead the proficient learners to dominate the interaction and rule the group work activity. Other researchers view that mixing higher level with lower levels learners would benefit both categories but only if co-operative work is assured.

Brown (2001) and Harmer (2001) identify the following principles for grounding a successful group work :

➢ Group work should be intended to provide learners with opportunities to interact and use the target language easily and freely. Indeed, they feel free from teachers' commands and domination, give their opinions, takes roles, negotiate meaning, and feel confident in leaning.

➢ Group work is aimed to create a positive learning atmosphere in the sense that some shy or low-level learners do not feel weak or impotent . This cannot be provided in whole-class grouping where learners confront the teacher individually.

➢ Group work increases autonomous and cooperative learning and lays much responsibility on learners. They should learn how to complete a task successfully by themselves or with the help of their peers.

It is important to say that EFL teachers should not introduce group work activities to undertake thoughtless activities, to fill the time, or to disengage from instructional duties. Some teachers can invest the group work time to take a rest, to read, to correct papers, or to prepare other lessons. Therefore, teachers should go beyond giving direct commands and should be involved in the group work so as it doesn't turn out an individual work.

3.1 Strengths of Group-work

➢ It enhances cooperative learning, increases STT (students' talking time), and stimulate learner-learner interaction.

➢ Unlike pair-work, problems of personal relationships does not affect the whole group performance.

➢ Unlike pair-work, various opinions and contributions are provided by members.

➢ Students learn from one another as skills of cooperation and negotiation are stimulated.

➢ It develops a sense of responsibility and enhances learners' autonomy, as they are obliged to take their own decisions without the direct interference of the teacher.

3.2 Weaknesses of Group-work

➢ When the class is divided into small groups, it becomes noisy and some teachers fail to control the class.

➢ Not all learners like group work, some of them are reluctant to work with peers and prefer individual learning.

➢ Incompatible groups could discourage and demotivate learners.

➢ Group work activities necessitate careful preparation and require much time to be successful.

➢ It is difficult to assess learners' skills and achievement appropriately.

➢ Though group work activities are supposed to endorse the use of L2, learners can use their L1 language while working together.

4. Ways of Grouping Students

   Grouping students allow them to work with peers of similar and dissimilar abilities. An EFL teacher generally asks the following questions: How best should I form groups? Once students are grouped, what should I do? How can I know that groups are working?.

   Once we decide to use groupwork or pairwork, we need to set operative grouping and follow some criteria. Harmer (2001) provides the following bases on which students   can be gouped:

   A/ Friendship: Putting fiends with friends in groups or pairs can make the activity pleasant. Teachers can leave the choice for leareners to choose their friends because learners prefer working with peers whom they like and admire. However, some learners can be exluded because they are not popular or less admired by class members.

   B/ Streaming : this means that learners can be grouped according to their skills and abilities. Researchers suggest that pairs and groups should be a mixture of higher level and lower level students. This would create a sense of coopertaion and make students learn from eachother. The weaker students can benefit a lot from their peers and acquire knowledge that cannot be sometimes acquired from the teacher.

   Another strategy for grouping students through streaming is setting groups where all memebers have the same level, yet;having different groups with different levels. This would help the teacher to focus on the weaker groups and giving them help and guidance, yet, talented groups can be given challenging activities (different activities for different groups). However, in this way of grouping, the sense and the value of coopertaive leearning is lost and weak learners may think that teaching is biased and unfair.

   C/ Chance: Teachers can group learners by chance, it means no ability and no friendship. This is the easiest way of grouping because it doesn't require any

pre-planning. According to the sitting arrangement in the classroom, learners who sit next or near eachother can set the group.

5. Group-work and Pair-work Procedures

First, we, tecahers, need to convince our learners that pairwork or groupwork are necessary and should be successful for some EFL activities. Certainly, some learners do not like these type of activities because they are retrovert or feel annoyed when working with a partner. Teachers should initiate discussions with learners before and after the groupwork activity and asking about how they felt about it. Further, teachers need to spend significant time in preparing these tasks and in explaining them in the classroom. Sometimes, we need to abandon the groupwork or the pairwork if we notice that our students are not showing willingness or readiness for them. Hamer (2001) suggests the following procedures for conducting group-work and pair-work activities:

A/ Before: Teachers should motivate learners and make them exited to get engaged in the group or pair work. First , learners should understand what they are going to do by giving them a clear framework. They must be given clear instructions about what and how to act , and when they should finish the work. For exapmle, students can be asked to predict the content of a listening or reading passage,to produce a piece of work such as a dialogue, an interview, or a play..,

The teacher can create a competitive atmosphere by rewarding the groups that finsh first or engage learners in a game-like activities in order to make them more enthusiastic.

B/ During: While learners are doing their work, the teacher can stand at the back, at the side, or at the front of the class in order to control what is happening and see who is engaged and who is disengaged. From time to time, the teacher need to circulte in the class in order to provide help to the groups whenver necessary. He/she should act as an organiser, observer, tutor, facilitator, and

participant. He /should observe learners' performance and involvement in the task, control their work, identify their needs, and clarify uncertainties.

C/After : The teacher need to make sure that the groups or pairs have successfully completed the work.After groups finsh their work, they should demonstarte their work in public. For good understanding, different problems, solutions, ideas, and conclusions can be compared and discussed in class.The teacher should learners the opportunity to discuss what they have done as he/she should offer clear and constructive feedback by assessing their work and making corrections.

6. Recommendations

When doing their task, learners could speak loudly and produce noises that disturb the teacher. However, these noises should be seen as a positive sign as long as learners communicate in L2 (English). In this case, the teacher should convince the learners that they are not required to shout or raise their voices and they can accomplish the work with moderate voice level.

Further, some EFL teachers may lose control of the class or have difficulties in controlling their learners because sometimes group work tasks generate misbehaviour and problems of discipline. Therefore, the teacher should set up rules for the activity, circulate in the classroom, give clear directions and instructions, and monitor the learners. The teacher should interfere whenever possible to encourage learners to use the target language. For a successful group-work task, teachers can follow these techniques:

➢ Planning carefully the activity. EFL teachers should plan and set clear objectives and should describe explicitly what students are expected to learn and be able to do. In other words, when planning a group work activity, teachers should define unambiguously the knowledge and the skills learners are expected to gain. They should mention in their instructional plans precisely the procedures and the directions to be followed as well as the materials to be used.

- Teachers should organise heterogeneous (varied, mixed) groups of four to six learners (according to students' number in the classroom). Students should be mixed as heterogeneously as possible. They should not be allowed to form their own groups on the bases of gender or friendship.

- Learners should be arranged in a way that helps them to face on another. A face-to-face interaction should be assured.

- Giving clear instructions and clarify the task to learners so that they can understand what they are supposed to do. These instructions should be clear, explicit, and precise.

- Deciding about numbers and members, and setting the allotted time. Sufficient time should be allotted for each group to complete the leaning task.

- Assigning roles and responsibilities whenever possible. This would force the shy or lazy learners to work and take part in the task. In a group-work activity, all members must have equal opportunities for learning and must think they all have responsibilities.

- Checking understanding and offering help during the activity. The teacher should walk around, ask and answer questions, guide and facilitate the job, control misbehaviour, assess performance, change members, and even be a member in a group if necessary.

- In case the teacher organises two or more group-work activities, it is preferable that learners work with different members for each activity.

- Devoting time for debriefing, correction, evaluation, feedback, and reward. This final step is very important to make the task valuable and interesting. Indeed, learners should present their work and share it with other groups.

- Finally, a post-group reflection should be allowed. After completing the group work task, learners along with their teachers should reflect on how well they achieved their objective, how well they worked together, and how well they helped one another.

7. Conclusion

When making decisions about how to group or pair students, we need to follow different   strategies according to the type of the activity. It is recomnded that group members should be changed constantly in order to avoid routine and boredom. Sometimes we need to change some members and numbers during the activity. This depends on the teacher's skills to take appropriate decisions in the classroom.

8. Activities

1.What differences can you make between pairwork and groupwork ?

2. What kind of activities that require groupwork strategies?

3. How can EFL teachers use piarwork to build up EFL learning skills? Illustarte some of these skills.

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1. What is a lesson plan?

Lesson planning is a thinking process, not just filling printed forms or templates. It is a guiding chart for classroom acting. A lesson plan can be defined as teachers' full description of the instruction that is intended to be presented for learners in the classroom.   This description can vary depending on teachers' decisions and preferences, the aim of the lesson, learners' needs and abilities, and the curriculum requirements. In other words, a lesson plan is a map that guides a teacher to proceed in the classroom in order to successfully run his/lesson.

According to Jensen (2002), a lesson plan can be viewed as a schedule that tells the teacher what and how to do in a specific teaching situation. It is a road map, a tool, a guide, and a resource that help the teacher to shift smoothly from one part to another. All   teachers are required to set a specific type of a lesson plan before they walk to their classrooms. Jenson views a lesson plan as follows:

It can be as simple as a mental checklist or as complex as a detailed two-page typed lesson plan that follows a prescribed format. Usually, lesson plans are written just for the teacher's own eyes and tend to be rather informal. But there may be times when the plan has to be written as a class assignment or given to an observer or supervisor, and therefore will be a more formal and detailed document.

(Jenson, 2002: 403)

Indeed, a lesson plan is a very important instruments that serves as a guide, resource, and basic document for reflection that help both novice and experienced teachers achieve better performance in their classrooms. Harmer (2001), views that a lesson plan reminds teachers about what to do and gives them confidence in the class. According to John (2006), novice teachers' training programs must provide them with enough practice about how to set a good lesson plan.

When planning, teachers decide what and how to teach and in what order. A plan reminds us and keeps us committed to our objectives. It can be also considered as an official record of what we taught in class that helps us effectively assess and test our students on the bases of the already presented lessons.

2. Advantages of Lesson Planning

A lesson plan is necessary because it gives the teacher a clear direction of what and how to teach. Studies have revealed that the quality of student's learning depends on the quality of teacher's planning. When teachers set good lesson plans, they focus in the classroom only on its implementation because they are not obliged to waste time on thinking about how or what to do next. More, lesson plans help teachers provide their learners with the appropriate and sequential progressing throughout the term or the year.

Further, planning helps teachers conduct their lessons in an organised and a comfortable way. They, along with their learners, will feel and observe that the lessons are properly sequenced and fit to the syllabus. Furthermore, having a

detailed plan in hand is a strong indication of commitment and professionalism. It shows that the teacher has devoted special time for his/learners. More, having a plan will reduce or even eliminate learning difficulties in the classroom and professional problems in the school or institute.

Indeed, lesson planning organizes the time of the classroom, arranges the content and the activities, and helps teachers attain their lessons' objectives efficiently. Here are some of the many benefits of lesson planning:

- ➢ A lesson plan helps the teacher provide an appropriate instruction.
- ➢ A lesson plan saves time and organizes the teaching.
- ➢ A lesson plan gives the lesson a shape and a framework.
- ➢ Plans help teachers think about where they are going.
- ➢ It helps teachers to think about what students will achieve from the lesson.
- ➢ It organises ideas, sets the teaching methodology and material.
- ➢ A plan gives a destination to teachers.
- ➢ It makes the lesson coherent.
- ➢ It helps selecting the most useful contents and activities that help achieving the objective.
- ➢ A lesson plan keeps the teacher free from mistakes during the course.
- ➢ It redirects teachers when they get distracted.
- ➢ It gives teachers something to refer to during the whole session.
- ➢ A lesson plan provides a good and an effective learning atmosphere.
- ➢ A lesson plan helps the teacher attain his/her instructional objectives.
- ➢ A lesson plan enhances teachers' self-confidence.
- ➢ It tells learners that their teacher knows what is he/she is doing.
- ➢ A lesson plan increases both teachers and learners' confidence.
- ➢ It is an official document that helps teachers reflect on their lessons and gain experience.

➢ Lesson plans can be handed for novice teachers for training or for substitute teachers when we have to be absent for several days (Jenson, 2002; and British Council , 2008).

It is important to note that teachers who do not prepare their lessons and think that they are able to proceed successfully in the classroom are wrong. In fact, this is an indication of laziness, negligence, and carelessness from those teachers.

3. Steps of a Lesson Plan

A good lesson plan can include the following steps:

3.1 Setting an objective

An objective statement includes the main focus of the course. It illustrates and clarifies what learners will be able to do by the end of the lesson. Objectives should be set first as teachers need to state purposes for their lessons.

Each objective should start with a verb that describes the action to be taken . So, statements of objectives should start with observable verbs in order to be able to know whether these objectives are attained or not. It is important for teachers to make the learning outcomes clear so that they can select the materials and the activities. In order to specify the objectives, a teacher should think about the following questions:

➢ What is the topic of the lesson?
➢ What do I want my learners to learn?
➢ What do I want them to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of lesson?
➢ Is this objective consistent with the whole curriculum?
➢ Is it the appropriate time for this objective?
➢ Does this objective relate to the previous objective?

The teacher should make his/her objective clear and should know and demonstrate explicitly what he/she wants his/her learners to achieve. In order to set consistent objectives, teachers need to relate to the teaching guides, the

curriculum, and the learners' textbook. Here are some examples of instructional objectives:

> By the end of the course, learners should be able to write a paragraph with a topic sentence and a concluding sentence.
> By the end of the lesson, students should be able to pronounce the consonant sound /S/ in different positions.
> By the end of the course, learners should be able to describe people and jobs.
> By the end of the course, learners should know at least four UN organisations.

The teaching objectives differ from one lesson to another and from one language skills to another and even the same language skill could have different teaching objectives. For example, a lesson for reading may have different objectives such as: practicing scanning and skimming skills, learning new vocabulary about specific field, practicing loud reading, or reading for understanding and summarising. In case a lesson should involve several objectives or sub-objectives, they should be appropriately ranked in terms of their importance.

3.2 Developing an Introduction; the Warming up

All lessons start with a warming up activity, and teachers need to plan the way they should link the previous lesson with the new one in order to stimulate students' interest.

Teachers need to plan warming up activities in order to prepare the students and familiarize them with the topic of the lesson. Indeed, a good lesson plan should set time to attract students' attention to the topic. This phase involves and introduction or a little warming up activity that stimulates learners' background knowledge and link it to the subject to be taught (Dixon, 2016). Researchers say

that it is not recommended that teachers inset directly in the topic without any diagnostic and introducing activities.

The teacher should set an inspiring introduction in order to motivate and stimulate learners and to provoke their thinking. An introduction can take different forms such as probing questions, a short video, or a short reading passage. Some expert teachers can use students' knowledge and information as an introduction to the new lesson. For preparing a good introduction, the teacher can think about the following questions:

- ➢ How should I introduce the topic?
- ➢ What good examples and questions should I include?
- ➢ Does this introduction serve the lesson objective?

A teacher can prepare a short introduction followed by some questions in order to diagnose his/her learners' skills and knowledge about the topic and to know whether the learners are familiar with topic or not. For example:

- ➢ How many of you have heard of WHO (World Health Organisation)
- ➢ It belongs to which Organisation?
- ➢ What roles does this organisation play?

It is worthy to note that although they are of eminent importance, it is recommended that the warming up activities should last from 5 to 7 minutes and no more time should be devoted to them.

3.3 Planning the Body of the Lesson

In this part, the teacher mentions and describes what he/she is going to teach. It includes the examples, the explanations, the questions, the activities, the materials to be used, the ways and the techniques and the strategies to be used, the time to be spent on each activity, and the discussions. Sometimes the topic is small and works as one single lesson for one session, other times, it is long, and then it should be divided into sub topics and sub objectives. The following questions should be considered for this step:

- ➢ What can I do to attain the objectives?

- ➤ What can I do to illustrate the topic and explain it in a different ways?
- ➤ How can I involve and engage learners in the topic?
- ➤ What examples can I include?
- ➤ What kind of productive questions and activities should I include?
- ➤ What materials can I use?
- ➤ What strategies should I follow?

3.3.1 Selecting the Materials

Teachers should think about the appropriate materials to be used according to the topic to be presented in order to make the teaching successful, interesting, and effective. Any lesson plan must relate to the content provided in the teachers' guides or in learners 'text books.

However, the teacher can act autonomously by selecting other teaching materials without deviating from the prescribed contents. For example, a teacher can use videos, tapes, pictures, computers, charts, and texts from the internet.

3.3.2 Setting Procedures and Techniques

The procedures and the techniques that can be followed to teach the same subject and to achieve the same objective may differ according to teachers' differences and preferences. So the teacher as a decision maker is autonomous to use the appropriate strategies according to his/her students' skills and abilities. These techniques reflect the ways of performing the planned tasks. In other words, this step explains to the teacher the how -to -do procedure.

For example, for the pronunciation of the final /d/ lesson, the teacher can write some words including this sound (worked, told, ended) on the blackboard, explains their different pronouncing, asks learners to pronounce them, and requiring them to use them in full sentences and read them loudly. These steps should be mentioned in the plan.

3.4 Planning to Check Learners' Understanding

Presenting, illustrating and explaining the subject in different ways and with different examples are not enough. Teachers should prepare some questions and activities in order to check their learners' understanding. They should assess what their students have got and what they still need to get. The following questions can be considered:

➢ How can I know that my students have understood the subject?
➢ What questions can I ask to check my learners' understanding?
➢ What kind of activities can I include to check understanding and know whether the objective has been attained or not?

Assessment and evaluation activities are very important to check students' understanding and to know whether the learners have grasped the lesson or not. In fact, this stage informs the teacher about what has been achieved and what is still needed to be done. Indeed, all objectives cannot be attained at 100%, but the higher percentage is an indication of a good lesson plan.

3.5 Developing a Conclusion

A teacher should summarise the main points covered in the course. A student can be asked to point out the main elements. Also, the teacher can preview the next lesson to show how this topic relates to the next coming. At the end, the lesson plan should include an assignment or homework.

3.6 Lesson Plan Reflection

It is important to note that there is no ideal lesson plan. Sometimes we discover that our plans didn't work as we had expected due to a number of factors and circumstances. This happens even with experienced teachers and this is not an indication of failure. So, teachers need to take time to reflect on their plans in order to discover what didn't work well and why and to identify the reasons that didn't help the accurate implementation of this plan. The teacher can reconsider the type of activities, the selected objectives and materials, and time management.

Therefore, some space should be left at the end to write any reflective comments about the lesson, to note the achievement of the planned objective, to

write students questions that went unanswered, to record students' reactions, to mark the activities or the materials that didn't work, to make any time adjustments, or to mention what still should be done. By doing so, the lesson plan will actually serve as a valuable and useful resource or reference for future instructional planning.

4. Characteristics of a Good Lesson Plan

A good lesson plan is the one which is based on the needs of the target learners. It includes teacher's experience, knowledge, and qualifications. It should demonstrate a clear description and understanding of the learning outcomes to be achieved. It should mention tangible materials and effective activities as it should reveal useful assessment strategies.

Introducing, presenting, practicing, and evaluating are the most agreed stages of any lesson plan. More, teachers need to raise opportunities for communication and discussion at the end of the lesson as a concluding strategy. At this final stage, some teachers may pave the way to the next coming lesson to get learners prepared for it. It is of paramount importance for novice teachers to make their lesson plans coherent by seeking strategies to make smooth transitions and links from one step to another.

With continuous practice, teachers can gain experience and lesson planning become more easier and useful. According to Jensen (2002), a good lesson plan should implicate certain principles of effective teaching; flexibility, variety, and coherence.

1. A good lesson should display variety. On the macro level, lesson plans should not follow the same order, length, or patterns. Different topics should be selected and different strategies should be used. On the micro level, each lesson should have different activities or examples. Sometimes we decide to give much time to our learners, yet emphasising the leaner-cantered approach, while other times, we take the lead to offer ample explanations due to the topic complexities. Further, variety should also be introduced for

classroom organisation as teachers need to set small group, pair group, and individual activities in order to eliminate students' boredom.

2. On the micro level, a good lesson plan should be coherent as learners should feel the logical transition from one step to another. Both teachers and learners should understand the aim of each activity. On the macro level, any lesson should complement the previous lessons and prepares learners to the next coming lessons.

3. A good lesson should be flexible because lesson plans should not be considered as instruments that commit teachers to fated presentation. Indeed, good teachers think and reflect while teaching as they must make modifications and adjustment when necessary. Sometimes, an unanticipated student's question or reaction could lead the whole instruction into another direction, yet creating magnificent teaching moments. Other times, brilliant ideas come to our minds when we start explaining or writing on the board.

Indeed, learning how to set good lesson plans requires practice and time. A novice teacher needs to over-practice planning in order to develop a routine and gain experience. In general, a lesson plan should include the goal, the method, the techniques, and the materials. The following elements can make a good lesson plan:

- ✓ Teachers should set written forms of lesson palns and avoid the web-ready made plans.
- ✓ The instructional objectives should be clearly defined.
- ✓ A lesson plan should ensure a sequential development or a continuity of the previous lesson.
- ✓ Good questions and examples should be mentioned in the lesson plan.
- ✓ A lesson plan must correlate with the textbook the class uses.
- ✓ Motivational strategies should be included.

✓ A lesson plan should illustrate the supportive materials to be used such as maps, charts, projectors, computer, and audio-visuals.

5. Considerations in Lesson planning

A good lesson plan should consider not only the content to be taught, the objectives, the activities and the materials to be used, rather; it should consider the following points:

➢ *Sequencing and pacing*:   the content and the activities should pass and flow logically and smoothly so that learners can make developmental progress. More, the *level of difficulty* should be considered. The teacher can ask questions such as: Do the activities have the right length and   are they varied and logically ordered so that learners remain engaged and motivated? Do my learners have the appropriate skills, abilities, and knowledge that enable them do the planned activities or not.

➢ *Time management*: Sometimes we are run out of time and we cannot cover all the points in the lesson. Therefore, when planning, we should ask questions such as: Is the time allotted for each step adequate or sufficient? Does the lesson plan devote time for students to interact with the teacher or with one another? In case the   lesson finishes early, is there any alternative? Essentially, teachers should mention the minutes devoted for each activity in the margin as they need to have a watch in their hands.

Time management can be very challenging for novice teachers because they lack enough experience that helps them predict how long each activity will take. While presenting the lesson, we sometimes discover suddenly that the activity is easily done and does not require much time as planned, or too difficult, yet requiring much more time. In this case, the good teacher must be very flexible to make the appropriate adjustment by reducing or extending the time allotted for each activity. When setting time, teachers should   consider the following points:

- ✓ Estimating how much time should be devoted to each activity and mentioning it next to each activity.
- ✓ Consider few minutes at the end of the course to answer leaners' questions, and to sum up and discuss the main points.
- ✓ Being ready and flexible to adjust your lesson plan timing according to learners' needs and to the classroom situation.

Sometimes, the novice teacher looks too many times at his/her watch to manage the time appropriately, and sometimes he/she finishes the lesson earlier without having any idea about what to do. To avoid these situations, extra activities or tasks should be planned apart.

- ➤ *The seating arrangement*: Teachers should mention the type of the seating arrangements which should be decided according to the topic to be taught or to the type of the activity. Some objectives require a group or a pair work strategy where students should sit in separate tables while other activities necessitate a horseshoe seating arrangement .

6. Lesson Plan Formats

Lesson plans can take different formats, but there is a consensus about certain elements that should be considered in a lesson plan such as learners' skills and backgrounds, the objectives, the content to be taught, the materials to be used, the time limitations , the activities, links with the previous lesson, and evaluation activities. More, all lesson plans should be coherent as they should mark the start, the body, and the end.

Putting more or less details is a matter of individual differences and preferences. While all teachers now use computers to save and type their lesson plans, there are many others who still prefer handwritten plans, use a notebook for each class, or use separate papers.

Most teachers mention in their lesson plans the date, the name of the teacher, the students' grade and the class number, the number of the lesson, the sequence

number, and the general competencies to be addressed. Some teachers write reminders such as giving or collecting any homework or assignments.

Obviously, the objectives should be clearly mentioned along with the teaching content and materials. Some teachers may list the materials in a separate box at the top of the page while others mention them along with the content. The activities, the procedures, the type of grouping, and the seating arrangements should be all described in the lesson plan. Here is an example of a lesson plan format:

1) **Lesson number :03**   **Teachers' Name:**
2) **Date :12/12/2020**
3) **Time :10h00-11h00**
4) **Class : 4th grade**
5) **Subject : Grammar**
6) **Topic of the lesson : Definite and Indefinite articles**
7) **Objective of the lesson: By the end of the course, students should be able to use definite and indefinite articles in different situations.**
8) **Materials and aids: Printed texts, blackboard, textbook,…**
09) **Introduction**
10) **Presentation and explanation of the topic**
11) **Questions and activities**
12) **Summary and discussion**
13) **Assessment and Evaluation**
13) **Home-work**
14) **Points of reflection**

6. Conclusion

If we want our leaners to come prepared for learning, we should be also prepared for teaching, and the best way to show our preparedness is having a lesson plan in hand.

An effective and productive lesson plan needn't be an ideal one and doesn't require that everything goes precisely as planned. It does not have to describe each element and every classroom activity in small details nor does it have to expect every classroom question or happening. However, it should have a clear objective for the lesson with the appropriate activities, materials, timing, and strategies. It is a guideline of what and how to do in the classroom.

It is important to say that all lesson plans are flexible and mutable and teachers are free to extend or reduce the duration of any activity, ignore any unimportant questions, add any other necessary explanations when presenting their lessons in the classroom. A good lesson plan is the one which guides but never commands what and how to teach.

In short, in order to set good lesson plans, novice EFL teachers need to over-practice planning as they should develop their knowledge about the principles and the theories of foreign language teaching and learning.

7. Activities

1. It is said: "*a plan a day keeps disaster away*". Explain
2. As a future teacher, what are the elements that you think are the most important in setting a good lesson plan?
3. Do you think you need to mention much detail in your lesson plan? Justify.
4. Based on the steps and the concepts prescribed above, prepare a lesson plan for teaching one of the elements in the following subjects: reading, grammar, or pronunciation.

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Unit 6: Textbook Use and Evaluation

Objectives:

1. Illuminating the importance of textbook use in the teaching-learning process.

2. Explaining how to evaluate, analyse, and use an ELT textbook.

1. About the Textbook

Textbooks play central roles in the field of language teaching and learning. Despite the technological advance made at all levels of education, the textbook is still considered as a crucial element for successful learning. EFL Textbooks are considered as essential elements that teachers use in the classroom. They are most preferable teaching materials used by EFL teachers because they give objectives for classroom instruction and include multiple topics, texts, and activities, yet giving the teacher many options and choices.

For some teachers, textbooks are used as supplement to their EFL instruction , while for others, a textbook is the foundation for their instructional contents and a major source of knowledge. For EFL learners, these coursebooks provide them with a direct contact with language outside the classroom.

Tomilson (2001) defines a textbook as the core material for the language learning course which includes work on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Indeed, a textbook for foreign language classroom contains all aspects of language instruction.

Further, the textbook is a source of knowledge which facilitates both teaching and learning. It identifies clearly the curriculum objectives for both teachers and learners. More, it assures consistent sequencing of topics and offers ready-made activities and examples, especially for unexperienced novice teachers. Indeed, it is a guide for both teachers and learners.

2. Importance of Using a Textbook

Despite the recognisable influence of the new technology on the teaching-learning process, textbooks are still the most effective tools used by teachers worldwide. The technological advance including the internet has not weakened the significant roles of ELT textbooks. Indeed, textbooks offer a range of subjects, activities, and procedures for both EFL teachers and learners.

Textbooks are important for ELT curricula because they provide both teachers and learners with the authentic and official knowledge about the English language corpora.A textbook can be seen as a teacher, a guide, a resource, a map, and a trainer. ELT textbooks provide both linguistic and cultural amount of knowledge.

The ELT textbook is a universal element of English language teaching. No teaching-learning situation can effectively take place without a relevant textbook. In academic contexts, EFL textbooks are considered as crucial teaching aids as EFL teachers draw on them constantly in planning, presenting, and evaluating. They provide unexperienced teachers with help and guidance in designing courses, activities, and procedures that assure logical progress in learning. For learners, textbooks are concrete materials for further non-classroom learning.

Textbooks can play significant in introducing reforms and innovation to education. They can help teachers build up sound knowledge about the subject they teach and update their teaching methodologies. Some scholars go far beyond these roles and say that textbooks are at the heart of language teaching and learning and view that they can even shape the social and the cultural behaviours of learners. Ur (1996), Cunningsworth (1995), and Haycroft (1998) state the following justifications for using textbooks:

- A textbook gives shape and framework for the teaching-learning programme.
- A textbook is reference to the syllabus.
- A textbooks provides the how-to-proceed to interpret the syllabus and making it functional.
- A textbook provides multiple ready-made texts, examples, and activities.
- Without a textbook in hand, learners will not see any objective for their learning, thus; underestimating it, and no efforts will be made by them.
- A textbook means guidance, security, and support for novice teachers and even for learners.
- Textbooks are good resources for autonomous learning and self-assessment
- says that textbooks help teachers save their time and energy. They help them plan their lessons, follow the pedagogical models, and select the appropriate activities.
- Textbooks represent for learners a foundation of non-classroom learning, self-reflecting, and self-assessment.
- argues that textbooks are psychologically effective for learners because they provide them with learning needs and help them assess their learning progress.
- Textbooks do not only represent the core of the English language instruction, but also provide opportunities for better teaching and learning.

Many teachers rely heavily on textbooks because they, according to them, provide them with an official teaching material which was drafted, adopted, and selected by experts and academics. For them, EFL textbooks have many advantages because they offer compatible vocabulary and grammar and provide a range of adequate listening, reading, and writing materials. Indeed, they give teachers ideas when they run out of their own.

Actually, novice and unexperienced teachers fail to provide consistent contents that fulfil the curriculum requirements and fit learners' needs. Moreover, many learners have positive attitudes towards their textbooks and do not agree

with teachers' personal ideas and chunks. For them, the textbook is an official reliable material which is worthy of trust.

3. Criticism to Textbook Use

In spite of the copious advantages of the textbook, there are many researchers who do not value these benefits and show their opposition:

➢ Allwright (1982) argues that textbooks are not flexible and are biased because they reflect only the linguistic, psychological, pedagogic, and methodological convictions and preferences of the authors and designers . Sometimes, the textbooks reflect even the political orientations of the authors and authorities.

➢ Some EFL textbooks 'contents are uninteresting, boring, inappropriate and deficient in variety. Therefore, some teachers believe they can afford more interesting topics and activities and refuse to be constrained or limited by the official textbook.

➢ Textbooks are just normal teaching materials which can be changed and adjusted. They can be appropriate as they can be incongruous, and therefore, they should be used eclectically and judiciously. Surely, not all topics and activities are useful,   not all tests are valid and reliable, and not all learners conform to the themes and contents.

➢ Sometimes, the textbook impose external objectives, topics, and styles which may not relate to both teachers and learners' differences and preferences, yet; controlling the method and the strategies and undermining the autonomous teaching and learning. Furthermore, the principles and the strategies in one textbook can be contradictory, inconsistent and outmoded.

➢ Some researchers   have disparaged (belittled) the linguistic, cultural, social, and gender biases of textbooks and their misrepresentation of people, events, countries, religions, places, and ideologies.

➢ The inclusion of topics and examples that convey cultural aspects to make learners successfully competent will force them to express themselves within the foreign culture and develop reluctance to their local culture and identity.

➢ Sheldon (1988) claims that textbooks could have numerous theoretical contradictions, practical drawbacks, and design defects. There are mismatches between learners' needs, teachers' views and preferences, and the textbook content.

➢ Some researchers refer to the fact that unexperienced teachers' overreliance on textbooks may lead to opposite effects on learners' achievements

➢ No single textbook can fit learners with different styles, interests, and needs.

➢ Topics and activities in the textbook can be extraneous, uninteresting, and boring.

➢ A textbook may limit teachers' critical thinking and leads to laziness.

➢ Sometimes or many times, the way textbooks are used in the classroom reflects much more teachers' opinions, attitudes, and preferences rather than learners' needs and wants.

Sometimes, textbooks for primary and middle school learners are selected through a process that involves suggestions and inputs given by university professors, faculty experts and advisors, secondary school teachers, and even politicians without involving the teachers in these schools. As a result, unfortunately, some teachers in the field find difficulties in understanding, implementing, and transmitting the content to their learners. Sometimes, some teachers develop negative attitudes towards textbooks because either they oppose their convictions and interests, or surpass their learners' abilities or even their abilities.

Therefore, EFL teachers can act positively by making good decisions and known how it works in their classroom situations. In other words, subject matter and pedagogical knowledge are necessary for teachers.

4. Textbook Evaluation

EFL textbooks have been continuously submitted to change and improvements due to the growing demands and challenges of the English language teaching and the roles this language is playing in the world. Since Textbooks are aimed to serve both teachers and learners and are still considered as the most effective pedagogical tools for teaching and learning, they should be continuously submitted to evaluation and analyses. Weaknesses and strengths of any ELT textbook should be identified by highly qualified experts and field practitioners in order to make the necessary adjustments to enhance the whole teaching-learning process.

At governmental level, textbook evaluation refers to the act of producing, assessing, and adapting. At the classroom level, this evaluation refers to teachers' abilities to evaluate the appropriateness of the texts, the examples, the activities, and the illustrations prescribed in the textbook and selecting the suitable ones for learners.

Teachers' textbook evaluation refers to the skills of making content analysis tasks in order to decide about the effectiveness of the topics and identify the merits and demerits of each point in the textbook. It is important to mention that the ideal or the perfect textbook does not exist in foreign language learning, therefore; the process of assessing, analysing, and selecting should be continuous and dynamic (Grant, 1987).

4.1 Why Evaluating a Textbook?

There are many good reasons for evaluating textbooks. At higher levels, the most important aim for such evaluation is improving the quality of textbooks and adapting new ones. Another reason is identifying the weaknesses and strengths in textbooks. The third motive is providing teachers with appropriate teaching

materials and improving their professional performance because they depend enormously on textbooks and learn a lot from them (Cunningsworth, 1995).

Another reason for textbook evaluation is building teachers' knowledge, improving, professional performance, and empowering their skills and their teaching expertise (Ellis,1997). In other words, this evaluation results in offering EFL teachers appropriate teaching materials necessary for classroom instruction.

In the classroom, teachers are required to make appropriate content selection from the textbook. They should be able to recognize the shortcomings of certain topics and exercises and decide on the most useful ones. Whenever necessary, they are required to make decisions and introduce appropriate alternatives according to their specific class.

4.2 Textbook Evaluation Criteria

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), textbook evaluation is basically a straightforward analytical matching process i.e matching needs to solutions. Textbooks are evaluated on the bases of their quality, usefulness, flexibility, and appropriateness. Researchers such as Harmer (1996) and Brown (1995) state that textbook evaluation can be based on physical criteria including the design and the organisational and logistical features.

Further, textbook evaluation can be based on other criteria such as methodology, aims, and procedures. Other criteria can involve the degree of its suitability to learners' age and abilities, to the teaching approach, and to the pre-set curriculum. More importantly, the evaluative criteria must involve the appropriateness of the content including the suitability of the linguistic and the socio-cultural contents with both teachers and learners' attitudes, abilities, needs, and backgrounds. Another criteria for textbook evaluation is the language authenticity, type, and content. This refers to the linguistic forms and functions, examples and illustrations, vocabulary, grammar, assessment and testing measures, and other skill-building activities.

It is important to note that any textbook selection is made at ministerial or governmental levels where administrators, programme directors, educational committees, syllabus designers, inspectors, and university teachers make effective contributions in the adaptation of any textbook. According to   Byrd in Cece Murcia (1992),   any textbook evaluation system must address the following points:

1. *Does the input fit the curriculum*? The fit between curriculum and content is necessary. In some states, in Algeria for instance, the Ministry of Education is charged with publishing textbooks and assumes the whole responsibility to assure the appropriateness of the materials and their aptness to the goals of the curricula. In other countries, like the United States of America, some schools publish their own curriculum goals and guidelines and invite publishers to provide inputs that fit those goals and guidelines. In this case, publishers compete fiercely to offer the best teaching inputs. Indeed, in   this system, the state involves various methods and techniques to control the contents and their appropriateness to the teaching goals.

Obviously, textbook evaluation should involve whether the content is congruent with the pedagogical goals or not. If the textbook content hardly fits the curriculum goals; yet it should be refined and complemented with additional input in order to back up   the curriculum.

2. *Dose the   input fit learners*? Textbooks are created for learners to meet their needs. They consist of three main elements: content, examples, and activities and exercises. More, any textbook is supported with various graphical elements including the print size, space, and illustrations (photos and pictures). People who are involved in the evaluation-for-selection process need to consider the following questions:

A/ Content: does the input meet students' interest and abilities? Is it useful?   Are there any elements (texts, explanations…) in the   content   that   could be unpleasant, immoral, offensive, or inappropriate? Do the descriptions,

explanations, and clarifications facilitate learning and lead to better understanding attainments?

b/ *Examples and activities***:** Are the examples apt to use?   Do the examples fit closely with the concepts they are intended to clarify? Do the activities and the exercises afford enough variety to meet the different learners' needs, abilities, and interests?

c/ *Format and presentation:* Does the textbook look good for the target learners? Are the illustrations, graphical organizers, and other design elements proper for their age and level? are the printed texts easy to read and apt for their reading abilities? Does the textbook include appendices and indexes?

3. Does the input fit teachers? Textbooks are not created only for learners, but also for teachers. Generally, teachers pursue three elements from the textbook: content, examples and models, and exercises. Textbook evaluators need to scrutinise if the textbook can be used appropriately and effectively by teachers. The following questions can be asked: can teachers easily and successfully handle this material? Does this textbook fit   their preferences and needs? Can it be accepted to be a good teaching material?

A/ *Content:* Textbook evaluators need to see if the content helps teachers achieve the goals of the course and the program. Is it a teacher-friendly textbook? Is it suitable for EFL teachers' abilities and skills? Can they easily understand the content so that they can successfully transmit and explain it to their learners? Are there accompanying and supplementary manuals or ancillaries to instruct teachers and show them how to use this textbook?

b/ *Examples and Exercises:* Are the examples and the tasks usable and practical for teachers? Are the exercises doable and feasible? Do they provide copious options for teachers (variety)? Is there an index or key answers of the exercises (grammar drills, comprehension questions, vocabulary activities …?

c/ Format and Presentation: do the illustrations relate closely to the content? Does the design fit teachers' flavours? Does the material provide good teaching opportunities for EFL teachers?

5. Teachers' Textbook Analysis

In the implementation process, the question goes as follows*: How can I, as a decision-making teacher, make this textbook workable by figuring out and selecting interesting lessons and activities for my particular learners?*   Actually, teachers, as field actioners are required to make their own analyses of textbooks. Judgements can be made about the yes and no, the in an out, and the good and bad in order to make proper instructional decisions. Evaluation can be made at level of content, examples,   activities, and illustrations. To start; it is recommended that EFL teachers read the whole textbook from the beginning to the end. This would help them discover the useful features as well as the anomalies.

Any teaching act involves three main elements: presentations, practice, and assessment and evaluation.   The *presentation* stage involves a review, an introduction, and the lesson explanations and examples. The *practice* stage involves the activities and the drills. The *evaluation* stage involves the teacher's acts to know whether the learners have grasped the lesson or not. So, any textbook is supposed to contain useful contents for each stage.

By making an initial reading of an EFL textbook,   an EFL teacher should ask questions about the following elements:

 A/ **Format and presentation:** How are the units and sequences organised? Are the units interrelated? What type of graphic organisers and illustrations are used? Are the texts long or short? Does it include a table of contents, references, appendices, and indexes? Are there key answers for assessment and evaluation exercises?

The design and the layout of a textbook means the way it is organised and the way it presents the language aims and activities. Evaluators can see if the learning objectives are clear and concise, if the topics are well detailed, if language

structures, functions, and skills are well presented and sequenced, if the textbook involves a variety of topics, and if it covers a vast array of subject areas.

B/Content: Does the content, including examples and activities, relate closely to the instructional objectives? What does this input offer me? What is each unit about? Does the content fit my particular learners (different abilities and interests)?

EFL textbooks are supposed to useful teaching material which includes authentic content which is made up of two parts:1) *the linguistic content* (vocabulary, grammar,…) and 2) the thematic content (education, schools, economy, gender issues,…). This latter is also called the topical content that is used to present the linguistic content. Unavoidably, the EFL teacher needs to analyse both of them in order to decide about the teachability of these contents.

For example, in teaching grammatical elements (linguistic content), an EFL teacher may notice that all texts and examples (topical content) focus on describing people or providing biographies; then he/she should act freely to provide additional and alternative examples without ridding the linguistic content. By doing so, he/she is making analysis for implementation.

C/ Practice: Are the tasks and activities practicable and useful for my learners? Are there optional exercises? Do the exercises, prescribed for practice, relate to the presentation of the content? Is there any relation between the aims of the activities and the general aim of the course or the unit?

In analysing the teaching activities for implementation, the EFL teacher can consider the following points:

➢ *Which of these activities can select for my learners*: The teacher needs to select from a variety of activities in order to meet the different needs and abilities of his/her learners and to attain the aims of the course.
➢ *Which exercises can be assigned as homework*: EFL teachers are required to assign homework for learners. The homework is a follow up practice or an assessment activity. Indeed, some activities require much time, or a non-

classroom efforts, or necessitate some research. Sometimes, homework activities can be used to prepare students for new work and attainments instead of assessing the previous ones.

➢ *Which activities require longer periods and can be done as projects*: Indeed, some activities require much time and much research, thus they should be assigned as projects.

➢ *Which activities require extra efforts and planning* : Certainly, some task necessitate much reflection, special equipment, and extra efforts and planning.

➢ *What links can be made between the activities*: The teacher should locate the connections between the tasks and pinpoint the recurring activities. Some activities have the same aims, then, no need to introduce all of them; unless consolidation is needed.

➢ *What activities I must exclude*: Not all activities are apt for use. The teacher must decide about the uselessness of certain exercises. Indeed, some parts in the text or some activities are not appropriate for the objective of my course, do not fit my particular class, require higher skills, or are less important . Additionally, some activities do not suit our personalities as teachers or contradict our ethics and values (for example, tasks which require singing, dancing,…).

D/ Assessment and Evaluation: Do the prescribed assessment activities reveal learners' understanding of the lesson? Do they help me make appropriate judgments and decisions? How much time can each activity take?

6. Characteristics of a Good ELT Textbook

The following criteria can be considered for measuring and qualifying a good ELT textbook:

➢ A good textbook is the one which answers the frequently asked questions by teachers: What am I going to do in class? In what way am I going to do it? What appropriate objectives shall I set? What are the convenient drills

and exercises that can I do for my learners? And what assessment and evaluation procedures and activities shall follow?

➤ A well-constructed textbook must deliver not only language contents that learners need to acquire, but also set a framework from which teachers can draw on , learn, and improve.

➤ It should have a good layout, design, and format: (illustrations, type size, colour)

➤ A textbook should offer an adequate breakdown of objectives and a decent themes sequencing of each unit, sequence or lesson. It should afford the four elements; presentation, practice, production, and evaluation.

➤ A good textbook is the one which clearly defines the learning goals and sets an appropriate up- to-date programme which should be based on previous needs assessment.

➤ It should contain relevant up-to-date content.

➤ A good ELT textbook should provide a multi-skills syllabus and covers all the language skills (receptive skills before productive skills; listen/read before speak/write). Some researchers, such as Harmer (1996), argue that the useful textbook is the one which provides an integrated multi-skills programme.

➤ The language should be at the right level of the target learners. Certainly, if the language is higher or lower level, then, no progress will be made.

➤ It should be suitable for a variety of learning styles and abilities.

➤ It should integrate both linguistic and cultural contents.

➤ It should contain clear graphics and visuals.

➤ It should incorporate real-life skills.

➤ It should combine a variety of methodologies and techniques.

➤ It should include different grouping strategies: individual, pair, and group work.

➤ It should join higher level thinking skills and problem solving tasks.

➤ It should allow sufficient learner practice.

➤ It should involve assessment and evaluation activities at the end of each unit.

> ➤ It should address grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary and offer practice.

7. Recommendations

Few teachers can enter a classroom without a textbook. This latter includes official contents and copious learning activities that give shape to classroom instruction. When teachers open the textbook, they have to analyse and judge the content on that page in order to decide about what to include, to add, to modify, and what to exclude. According to Harmer (1996), when dealing with a textbook, the teacher has three options: *omitting, replacing, and adding*.

Indeed, whenever a teacher considers any points of inappropriateness in the lesson prescribed in the textbook, he/she should omit the unnecessary content, introduce alternatives to the omitted parts, add what is missing and needed, and adapt a new version of the content. Actually, a teacher can add extra activities in order to attain his/her lesson objectives. In adapting, the teacher can keep the same text or content and presenting it in his/her own style. This means keeping the same material and doing it in a more creative style. This is not wrong, but must be part of the teacher's reflective work. However, it is not recommended to omit all texts and activities or ignoring the whole textbook because learners may devalue the textbook and wonder about its importance in learning. Some may say: "Why did we bother to buy this textbook?"

Teachers should use other instruments according to their learners' needs and styles because each textbook has shortcomings and inadequacies. They should know how to incorporate and organize textbook content to make learning much more effective. Indeed, laying much responsibility on textbooks as direct cause for lower learning achievements is not fair because teachers' ability in evaluating and selecting the appropriate activities from a textbook is crucial. More, the teaching skills and techniques are very necessary for effective textbooks content transmitting.

It is important to say that using textbooks skilfully and creatively is one of the teaching skills. Good teachers do not follow a textbook word by word, but they use the best of it and add other ideas and activities from other colleagues, books, manuals, and internet. They should identify problems, make their own activities, add supplementary materials, deliver information in different ways, use pair and group work strategies, and updated teaching techniques.

8. Conclusion

Textbook designers and evaluators need to take into consideration not only the fit between the curriculum and the content of the textbook but also the fit between the teachers and the textbook as well as the fit between the learners and the textbook.

In their turns, EFL teachers should evaluate and analyse the content and consider its teachability in order to make appropriate lesson plans for their daily classroom instruction. It is agreed that teachers must act as free agents and be autonomous to make appropriate decisions about the usability of the material in accordance to their particular learners' needs, abilities, and interests.

We, teachers, as do our learners, have different personalities, attitudes, and abilities. In other words, there is no magic or an ideal textbook that can meet all teachers and learners' preferences and needs. Actually, textbooks are set to help, guide, and offer official teaching materials, but never to limit ingenuity and creativity.

9. Activities
1. Novice teachers rely heavily on textbooks. Do you think it is necessary to train them how to evaluate, analyse and use them? Explain your answer.
2. Why is textbook evaluation and analysis important for effective teaching and learning?
3. What techniques do you suggest for supplementing an EFL textbook?

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Appendix

Sample Checklist for Textbook Evaluation

1/ Physical Design

1. Is the cover of the textbook solid and durable?

2. Is the script on the front page and on the other pages attractive and nice-looking?

3. Is the type size of the textbook   suitable and appropriate for the learners of this level?

2/ Subject matter

1. Does the subject matter cover a variety of topics appropriate to the interests of the learners for whom the textbook is intended?

2. Is the ordering of materials good?

3. Are the topics and the themes logically ordered and arranged?

4. Is the content accurate and up-to-date?

4. Are the activities and the content graded according to the needs of the students?

3/ Vocabulary and grammar

1. Is the vocabulary load (i.e., the number of new words introduced every lesson) reasonable for the learners of this grade?

2. Do the vocabulary load   ensure logical gradation from simple to complex items?

3. Are the new vocabulary items repeated in the lesson for reinforcement?

4. Is the sentence length equitable for the students of this grade?

5. Is the number of grammatical points   appropriate?

8. Do the sentences and paragraphs follow one another in a logical sequence?

9. Are linguistic items introduced in meaningful situations to facilitate understanding and ensure assimilation and consolidation?

4/Activities and Exercises

1. Do the activities develop and assess knowledge and comprehension?

2. Do the activities involve new vocabulary and structures?

3. Do the activities provide practice in different ways and types (sentence completion, gap filling (verbs)?

4. Does the textbook include a final evaluation exercises? Or shall I prepare my own ones?

5/Illustrations

1. Do illustrations provide a good atmosphere for practice?

2. Are the illustrations clear, simple, and free of extraneous or complicated details that may confuse learners?

3. Are the illustrations closely and directly related to the content? Are they printed close enough to the text?

Sample Checklist for Textbook Evaluation

Daoud and Celce Murcia ; In M.Celce-Murcia and I. McIntosh 1992: 302-207)

Unit 7: The Competency-Based Approach

Objectives:

1-Identifying and describing The Competency-based Approach

and the Competency-based language teaching.

1. About the Competency-based Approach

Within the age of globalisation, educational systems in the world have been focusing on the economic and social development. In fact, the pedagogical contents have been set to correspond the social and economic needs in all over the world. So, the Competency-based Approach was aimed to fulfil these requirements. One of the aims of CBA is to create relationships between knowledge, situation, and procedure in order to solve problems.

The Competency-based Approach was first implemented in the United States of America. It emphasise   the acquisition of life   skills and is based on theories of   learning which views that for productive learning to take place, students should know that educational content is intended to improve not only their learning but also their lives. Indeed,   learners are encouraged to use their pre-acquired experiences and to activate their background knowledge to reach higher levels of performance.

With the opening of the 21ˢᵗ century, Algeria moved to the use of CBA as a modern approach .This approach is inspired by the cognitive and the constructive theories. In fact, it intends to link the classroom learning to the outside world. Due to the globalisation requirements, Algeria has introduced radical changes and reforms in the educational field and adopted the competency-based approach (CBA) as a teaching approach at all levels in order to modernise the educational system and to improve the learning achievements. In the field of the English language teaching, CBLT was aimed to enhance learners' attainments by exposing them to the target culture and help them to be autonomous learners.

According to Hirtt (2009), the Competency-based Approach came to existence because of two major needs: the world wanted a qualified workforce to serve economy and business; and the need for useful pedagogical contents that produce qualified individuals. It is a skill or characteristic of a person which enables him or her to carry out specific or superior actions at a superior level of performance.

The general goal of the Competency-based Approach is to proliferate good citizens who are able to serve the nation. The CBA is intended to produce skilful learners who know how to act effectively to in different problem situations. It pushes them to use and relate what they learn at school in their everyday life.

According to Guskey, 2005, CBA refers to an educational view that identifies the learning goals in terms of a set of skills, knowledge, and behaviours that learners need to acquire at the end of a course, a term, or a school year. Within CBA, learners are supposed to learn how to learn and how to acquire knowledge. In other words, learners should not be given knowledge deductively, but should be given the cognitive strategies and the skills that enable them to learn by themselves. Further, learning is not only about gathering information or applying rules, but more importantly, is about thinking, analysing, synthesising, and evaluating.

As far as the teaching-learning process is concerned, the concept of competency can refer to a system of conceptual procedures that help recognise a problem task and its possible solutions. It is, in other words, a know-how to act process which includes a set of skills that can be learnt and used to solve specific problems in specific situations. More, the competency-based approach stresses the knowledge transmission and the skill development. Unlike the traditional methods which focus on the memorization of fixed knowledge, CBA pushes students build up new knowledge, to acquire new skills, and to foster the autonomous learning.

According to Rogiers (2004), the Competency-based Approach is intended to achieve the following aims:

- ➢ Focusing on the competencies that learners should master at the end of each academic year, term, or session rather than emphasising what the teacher should provide. In fact, the teacher's role is all about organising, encouraging, facilitating and helping; while learners' role is about building knowledge, suggesting ideas, and seeking information.
- ➢ Giving sense and importance to the learning outcomes and making the learners feel that what they learn at school helps and serves them in their real life. They are no more asked to memorise information, but rather are required to use their knowledge to solve social problems.
- ➢ Assessing and rewarding leaners' achievements on the bases of their ability to act successfully to solve concrete problematic situations.

With regard to ELT, competencies can be defined as the skills that students need to acquire in order to develop their abilities and enhance their level of assimilation in all areas of language, and eventually, reach higher standards. Therefore, the competencies are determined by learners' needs and demands which the teachers should take into account in any teaching situation.

2. Competence and Competency

Most of the English language dictionaries define the term "competence" as" *the ability to do or perform some task"* or *"the quality of being adequately or well qualified physically and intellectually"*. According Zarifian (as quoted in Batime 1999), competence includes taking initiative and responsibility in the situations that one can confront. It refers to one's ability to prior knowledge and experience to act effectively in different situations.

Weinert (2001) defines the concept of competence as a specialised system of aptitudes, skills, and abilities which are necessary for attaining particular objectives. Indeed, competence cannot be seen as a fixed or static concept, but rather a comprehensive process which involves life-long learning, self-learning, professional success, and social development.

According to Bunda and Sanders (1979), there are two types of definitions for the term 'competency". The first type considers competency as a hypothetical concept which can refer to the intelligence, skills, and achievement construct. The second type relate competence to the explicit or implicit performance.

Further, competency could refer to a bunch of abilities relating to excellence in a specific activity while competence could refer to the state of being qualified enough of to act in a different situations. More, It refers to the individual's characteristics and skills which enable him or her to carry out specific or superior actions at a superior level of performance. The term *"competency"* is central to the Competency-based Approach. According to Richards and Rodgers:

> *Competencies consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity.*
>
> (Richards and Rodgers , 2001: 144).

As far as ELT is concerned, **c**ompetencies are the various skills learners have to be taught; this may lead them to acquire the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an interactional way to be able to use them later in their daily lives. In short, language competency refers to a set of cognitive, social, and communicative skills.

3. The Competency-based Language Teaching

As far as CBLT is concerned, learners are supposed to use the linguistic knowledge to communicate in real life situations. Actually, learners should acquire the communicative competence in order to communicate successfully. Docking (1994) defines CBLT as follows:

> *It is designed not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it.*
>
> (Docking, 1994: 16).

In other words, according to the CBLT, language is taught to meet situational and functional goals. Therefore, language teachers are required to teach the different vocabularies, forms, and functions that students could face in their real life. Language functions should be the main focus in the CBLT. It is not enough for learners to know the language, but they must be able to successfully use it. The following points identify the characteristics of CBLT:

- ➢ CBLT is a teaching approach which emphasises the achievements of language learning.
- ➢ CBLT stresses what learners are projected to achieve and to do with the target language.

➢ CBLT is based on a practical perspective to language teaching and its framework is aimed to meet students' needs and interests and to provide the necessary skills needed for successful language learning.

➢ CBLT views that language forms can be inferred from language functions.

➢ CBLT requires that teaching goals should be divided into short-term goals and units should be divide into sub-units so that learners can make developmental progress in their learning.

➢ CBLT pushes teachers to refresh their knowledge, invigorate their teaching programmes, and innovate their assessment methods (Docking, 1994).

More importantly, the Competency-based Language Teaching gives great importance to communication. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001: 143):

> *CBLT is also built around the notion of communicative competence and seeks to develop functional communication skills in learners. These skills are generally described in only the most general terms, however, rather than being linked to the performance of specific real-world tasks, CBLT thus shares some features with Communicative Language Teaching.*

(Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 143).

Indeed, language is seen as an effective means of communication and interaction. Each situation necessitates a specific kind of language to be used. In other words, people use different vocabularies and forms in different communicative contexts.

4. The Characteristics of the CBA, CBLT

The Competency-based Approach is intended to foster autonomous learning and to make a shift from sheer memorization to the development of

higher order intellectual and life skills. In fact, it emphasises the learning outcomes and addresses what the students are expected to do rather than what they are expected to learn. It describes the learning goals in terms of skills, knowledge, and behaviours that learners should acquire at the end of study course (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In other words, CBA is a functional approach to learning that focuses on life skills and assesses the mastery of those skills according to students' actual performance.

The following characteristics that can be involved in the application of CBA in language teaching:

- ➢ The aim is to enable learners to become autonomous individuals able to cope with the world demands
- ➢ Language is taught as a function of communication
- ➢ The focus of language instruction is on what learners can do with this language.
- ➢ Language learning is divided into sequences and objectives are broken into sub-objectives so that progress can be observed. It is called modularised instruction.
- ➢ Continuous and ongoing assessment is of great importance in order to detect students' needs, strengths, and weaknesses.
- ➢ Assessment is based on learners' ability to demonstrate specific behaviours.
- ➢ Individualised learning is encouraged

5. EFL Teachers' Roles in the Competency-Based Approach

Within the Competency- Based Approach, teachers are seen as important partners in the English language teaching process .They are supposed to adequately implement this approach and to sense life and voice to the teaching theories .

Since CBA is action oriented approach, it requires teachers in action who can draw on their experience and their skills in the subject matter. They are

required to act as social agents, as decision makers, and as self-reflectors. Further, they need to act as educators, facilitators, receptive, listeners, researchers, observers, motivators, helpers, controllers, knowledge builders, instructors, managers, organisers, and evaluators.

6. Criticism to the CBA

Despite its various benefits, CBA has many shortcomings. It has been subject to criticism by many educationists and scholars:

- ➢ The teaching content is based on learners' needs and teachers are required to carry out a needs analyses process. In fact, it is not possible to know each individual's needs and abilities.
- ➢ Generally, the competencies are already prescribed in the teachers' guide or in the students' textbook. So, this contradicts the principles of CBA which call for autonomous learning and needs-based instruction.
- ➢ It is not possible to teach all competencies needed for real life situations. Learners can fail to relate the classroom competencies to the real world situations.
- ➢ The lack of the teaching and the resources.
- ➢ Abstract and difficult academic concepts.
- ➢ It is difficult to develop a list of competencies for each teaching programme.
- ➢ Teachers' attitudes, poor teacher training programmes and lack of financial resources.
- ➢ Poor planning, large classes, and time constraints.
- ➢ Poor examination strategies and poor assessment methods.
- ➢ The focus is on life skills, behaviours, and performance rather than on the cognitive skills.
- ➢ It prescribes social roles for learners and neglecting the core concern of learning.
- ➢ Critical thinking is not emphasized and is not assessed.

- ➢ It is useful for business, but not good for humanity because education is more than developing competencies for jobs and occupational areas.
- ➢ It accelerates the process of the capitalization of humanity.
- ➢ There is a risk of neglecting the local culture and identity for the foreign cultures.

In sum,

It is worthy to note that CBA helps develop autonomous learning and improves learners' creativity. It is an approach which leads them to acquire the skills that enhance self-learning and self-reflection. It pushes students to use their lower achievements to reach higher ones.

- ➢ Thanks to this approach students can increase their abilities to discover observe, , apply, control, monitor, and integrate their own learning.
- ➢ This approach is based on problem solving tasks through which learners can go beyond the obstacles in their learning.
- ➢ The competency-based approach is seen as a constructive approach in the sense that it leads students to use their previously acquired knowledge and skills to build up new competencies.
- ➢ It is seen as a cognitive approach in the sense that it is intended to enhance students' creative thinking and to increase their autonomous learning .
- ➢ One of the elements that characterises this approach is the project work that learners are required to conduct with the help of their teacher. Projects, as leaner-centred work, should be under the continual guidance of the teacher.

6. **Activities**

1. You saw last year the teaching approaches and methods. What differences can you make between the communicative approach and the Competency-based approach?

2. The Competency-based approach is intended to build up both learning and social skills. Explain.

3. Do you   think that CBLT is useful for the Algerian EFL learners?

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Domain: Didactics.

Module: Didactics of English

Class: Master 2, Didactics

Unit 8: Assessment and Evaluation

Objectives

1. Defining assessment and evaluation.

2. Illustrating the advantages of assessment.

3. Illustrating the types, stages, and tools of assessment.

1. Assessment: Definitions and Concepts

Gathering data about learners, interpreting evidence, and improving instruction are assessment stages through which teachers can improve the learning outcomes of their learners. Certainly, assessment is related to instruction and learning because it improves the quality of teaching and increases   learners' attainments. This can be done through gathering information , interpreting data, making decisions, adjusting the instruction,   setting good classroom activities, and providing constructive feedback.   Here are some definitions of the process of assessment:

> ➢ Assessment can be defined as the process of detecting and describing the learners'   knowledge,   understandings,   abilities,   and   skills (Black&William, 1998).
> ➢ It is a classroom activity used to endorse learning by gathering data and giving feedback   (Black &William, 1998).
> ➢ In other words, it is the process of knowing about how students are learning so as to make the correct decisions in setting objectives and planning instruction.

- *"Assessment is an integral part of instruction…effective classroom assessment is relevant to immediate learning"* (Carr and Harris, 2001 :.35).

- It includes teachers' observation, classroom discussions and analyses of learners' work including homework and tests.

- It refers also the process of evaluating, marking, and grading students' achievements.

- It is regarded as a process of gathering, synthesising, and interpreting information in order to make decisions on learners' performance.

- In class, assessment is carried out to diagnose learners' problems, to judge their academic performance, to provide constructive feedback to students, and to plan instruction (Airasian, 1994). It involves set of strategies that offer teachers abundant opportunities to make judgements and decisions about their learners' abilities.

- In brief, assessment can be defined as being diagnostic, formative, and summative. These three constituents are used together to help both teachers and learners to know what has been achieved and to determine what still to be done.

Actually, poor assessment devices lead to poor learning accomplishments and a well-designed assessment enriches both teaching and learning. The process of assessment should not be detached from instruction nor from the curriculum . It is, in other words, a process which is used to inform the teaching and to enhance the learning.

2. Stages of Assessment

Note the key features of each stage:

2. *Step 1: Information gathering*. Obtaining a variety of information as accurately as possible.

3. *Step 2: Interpreting and analysing data, and making judgements:* Judgments are made after analysing gathered data.

4. *Step 3: Adjusting instruction and making decisions:* shaping the suitable courses of action and providing constructive feedback.

2. Assessment VS Evaluation

Assessment is a classroom activity conducted to provide a valuable feedback for the improvement of both teaching and learning. It is the process of gathering, analysing, and interpreting data about students' needs, strengths, and weakness in order to adjust and improve instruction. It is defined as the observation of the process of learning and the collection of frequent information about learners. In contrast, *evaluation* is seen as a process of using methods and measures to judge the learners' achievements for the purpose of grading and reporting.

Assessment is the design of classroom techniques and methods that provide information on how learners respond to particular teaching approaches. It is a continuous and an ongoing process as it occurs at any time. Whereas, evaluation is a summative result used for judging and appraising .It occurs through quizzes, exams, papers, or tests at the end of a session, semester, or a year. In brief, assessment is for learning while evaluation is of learning.

4. Advantages of Assessment

➤ Assessment is not only a process of evaluating, placing, and grading learners, but also as a comprehensive process that adopts several forms and functions to reach specific goals.

➤ Classroom assessment is part of classroom instruction and plays vital roles in refining and enhancing the learning process.

➤ Teachers use a variety of activities in order to test and measure what learners know and what they still need to know.

➤ Assessment provides a reliable data about teaching learning learning.

➤ It helps teachers get a clear view about learners' needs, strengths, weaknesses, and accomplishments. Accordingly, teachers can identify directions for future instructional developments, make reliable decisions, and give constructive feedback rather than giving only ranks and grades.

➤ Assessment stimulates learners, increases their motivation, encourages self-esteem,   and builds up the skills of evaluation.

4. **The Distinctive Features of Classroom Assessment**

➤ Classroom assessment is an integral part of teaching.

➤ The primary distinction between internal and external assessment is that the internal assessment involves teachers and learners, whereas, external assessment includes standardized national tests or exams designed by other assessors for the reason of grading and marking learners.

➤ The teacher-made assessments methods are and should be tailored according to daily instructional needs.

➤ The primary goal of classroom assessment is not to evaluate and classify the learners' performance but to inform teaching and enhance the learning.

➤ Classroom assessment does not only involve formal tests, but also observation, questions, and activities.

For good learning to occur**,** congruence (equivalence) should exist between instruction, assessment, and outcomes. Authenticity, feedback opportunities, validity, fairness, efficiency, feasibility, and using multiple methods are important characteristics of effective classroom assessment (Mc Millan, 2000).

 5. **Types of Assessments**

There are many types of assessments which occur in different times, at different levels, in different forms to accomplish multiple purposes.

5.1 Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment is the process of diagnosing learners' strengths and weaknesses in the very beginning of the course. It greatly facilitates teachers' task to shape instruction, meet   learners' needs, or -at least- helps them plan classroom activities appropriate for t their level. In this sense, Jean Jacques Rousseau, in the following statement, calls for the introduction of pre-instruction assessment

activities:" *Teachers, make it your first task to know your student better, for you surely do not know them.* (Jean Jacques in Ellis, 2001: 67).

This type of assessment is aimed to detect learners' readiness visa-vie a skill or a programme. It, also, identifies for both teachers and learners the needs and demands that should be met in any area of knowledge. The strengths lead to a formal consideration and should be explored in addressing the weaknesses.

Diagnostic assessment occurs when students move to a new learning programme or at the beginning of a course or a programme in order to develop plans and make links so as to prepare the next steps. The gathered information can be used for planning the lessons and translated to teaching practices. In short, diagnostic assessment is an educational strategy used by teachers to determine the learning and the instructional goals. It paves the way to a continuous formative assessment.

5.2 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a continuous, interactive, and dynamic process. It occurs and should be carried out in ways that help students make a real progress in their learning. It aims at knowing about how learners are progressing and where they are having troubles. It also helps teachers to make the necessary instructional adjustments so as to offer more opportunities to practices It includes the process of appraising, judging, or evaluating students' work or performance and using this to shape and improve students' competence (Gipps, 1994). Formative assessment is characterised by its progressive nature as it can happen at any period of time, it can be planned or unplanned, proactive or reactive, and formal or informal.

As for *informal assessment*, it is a way of gathering information about learners' performance in normal classroom conditions. This can be done without establishing test conditions as it is done over a period of time. In contrast, *formal assessment* is carried out through tests which are used to find out about the learners' suitability to follow a course of a study and to know how learners are progressing in order to identify problem areas. Through tests teachers can know how much students have learnt during the course or during the academic year.

5.3. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment provides evidence of what students have got at the end of a specific term of learning. It marks the important phases of students' development and should be formally recorded in the form of scores and marks. More importantly, it should be planned so that students can have enough time to prepare themselves and gain confidence in whatever area they are assessed in or about.

In addition to this, summative assessment is generally used to discover what learners have achieved during the program of the study. It is carried out at or towards the end of the course for the sake of knowing if learners have acquired the target skill as it gives an overall picture of learners' performance.

In the form of tests or exams, summative assessment aims at raising the standards of learning as it indicates the extent of success and the points of failure. It helps teachers make perfect judgements about where students are successful and where they are not in any area of learning.

6. Self-Assessment

Successful language learning can be reached while learners are autonomous and are actively engaged in the process of learning. Self-assessment includes the process of reflective thinking. In more clear words, reflection and self-assessment are linked to each other in the sense that it is a pedagogical tool which enables learners to reflect on their own practice and understand their learning. These are some of the advantages of self-assessment:

- ➢ It provides teachers with useful information about learners' expectations and needs.
- ➢ It also helps teachers know about learners' problems and worries. It gives information about how learners feel about their own progress, their reactions to the methods and techniques being used, and what they think about the course in general.
- ➢ It is an integral part of learning.

- It makes learners know about their achievements by giving them the opportunity to make reliable and valid judgements.
- It is a key issue to autonomous learning as it helps learners establish goals and manage their own learning. It involves the ability to make choices and assume the responsibility for the practice in class.
- It is useful for learners as they can monitor and evaluate their levels of knowledge because it is what the students see from their own perspective (Oscarson, 1989).
- It can be encouraged by asking learners questions about what and how they have learnt. This can foster learners' evaluative attitudes.

The most important thing about learners' self-assessment is that it cannot work in a context where marks have an intrinsic value in themselves or in a competition atmosphere. In short, it should have nothing to do with marks. It should focus on thinking about performance and progress in individual terms.

7. Peer Assessment

Peer assessment is a key strategy that includes learners in taking more responsibility for their own learning. Here are some of the advantages of peer assessment

- It raises the opportunity to students to see the gains for themselves rather than for their teachers.
- It gets learners involved in observing, monitoring and making judgements about their peers' learning.
- It encourages cooperative learning.
- It helps students learn from each other without the direct intervention of their teacher.
- It improves the group work by having learners take collective responsibility in identifying their learning needs and planning how these needs can be addressed.

➢ Students can articulate their understanding and make it judged and assessed by their peers. As a result, peer feedback, in the form of questions and comments, stimulates learners to reflect on what has been got and what still needs to be done.

➢ It can provide rich information that cannot be provided by teachers.

➢ It motivates learners and engage them in active learning.

➢ It makes assessment a shared activity by raising the proposition that the learner is the best person to assess learners' performance.

➢ It develops learners' autonomy, maturity, and critical abilities as it involves the transfer of their personal skills.

9. Characteristics of Effective Assessment

➢ Effective assessment should be congruent with instruction and integral to it.

➢ It should be based on authentic tasks and meaningful processes.

➢ It is multi-dimensional and uses a wide range of tools and methods and strategies such as test, observation , projects , activities, and rubrics .

➢ It should be based on criteria that learners know and understand.

➢ It should be equitable in the sense that it should offer opportunities for success to every learner. In fact, it should not only focus on identifying deficits but also on demonstrating the knowledge, the skills, and the talents that learners own.

➢ It should be continuous, ongoing, and woven into daily instruction so that learners can receive frequent feedback and make progress.

➢ Assessment results should be used   provide copious opportunities for teachers to review, revise, or change instruction for the interest of their learners.

10. Assessment Tools (Methods)

Teachers can use various methods and tools in assessing their students. These strategies involve learners themselves in the process by having them take part in judging and evaluating their learning so that they discover their needs and

wants. There are different techniques classroom teachers use to obtain information about their students:

> **Inquiry**: to inquire is to ask. Whenever you wish to know students' opinions, feelings, interests, likes and dislikes, and so forth, ask them. Effective teachers always ask their students how they feel about what is going on. They know the value of information gained through inquiry.

> **Observations:** are made by teachers whenever they look, listen, feel, or use any other senses to find out what is going on in the classroom. Observations of student performances, habit patterns, and interpersonal interactions all provide the teacher with helpful information.

> **Analysing:** is the process of breaking something down into its component parts. For example, a teacher might analyse grammar assignments to discover the kinds of errors students are making.

> **Questionnaires:** are instruments designed to obtain information about opinions, feelings, and interests. They can be used when we are not certain about the type of responses we might get.

> **Testing:** is being used whenever there is a common situation to which all students respond. There should be a set of rules for scoring the responses, and a description (usually numerical) of each student's performance.

> **Projects:** Research projects allow learners to achieve the learning outcomes in individual ways. In fact, assessment can be built up into the project throughout the different stages from planning, to researching, to the presenting of final work. Projects are distinct from the other types of written assessment as they are cumulative i.e. they reflect the work done over an extended period of time rather than in response to a particular prompt. Through projects, learners draw upon the skills they have developed over time. In general, it includes three components: a research paper, a product of activity, and an oral presentation. Its implementation as a tool of assessment involves both teachers and learners who cooperate to reach the established goals. Assessment through projects requires

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teachers to guide the learners' selections and help them accomplish their work while learners are required to make efforts to present a better work.

11. Conclusion

Assessment is a continuous process. It is designed to provide teachers with information about their learners. It is intended to make learners' understanding visible and clear so that teachers can decide what to modify or innovate in their teaching. Indeed, it is an interactive process that helps teachers align instruction, identify particular needs ,create differentiated teaching strategies ,and offer better learning opportunities by enhancing learners' motivation and consolidating their commitment to learning .

In short, assessment focuses on the nature of learners' strengths and weaknesses at any point over time. It is different from evaluation in the sense that it is a continual process that serves and improves the learning rather than evaluating it.

12. Activities

1. What differences can you make between assessment and evaluation?
2. How can assessment enhance both autonomous and cooperative learning?
3. What type of activities do you suggest for diagnostic assessment?
4 .What other assessment tools can you recommend for better teaching?

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