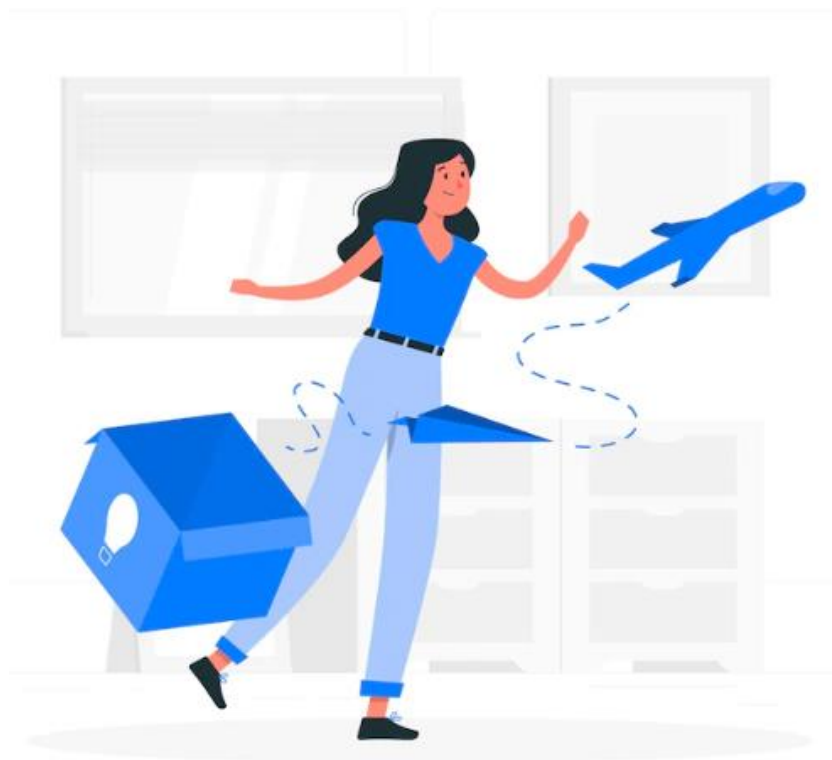## Lesson planning

This chapter analyses the elements of an effective lesson plan and the most common strategies for efficient lesson planning, outlining how to use them in face-to-face and online learning environments. After reading and exploring the chapter, you should be able to:

- ✓ make an outline of a lesson plan tailored to your context and your learners' needs,
- ✓ apply appropriate strategies in planning face-to-face and online lessons.

The chapter includes the following sections:

1. Preparation is half the battle – the importance of planning in education
2. What should you plan and how should you plan? The role of the educator
3. How to create a perfect lesson plan (or a perfectly good lesson plan)
4. Lesson planning in face-to-face, synchronous, and asynchronous education
5. Challenges in planning online lessons
6. Questions for reflection
7. References and resources

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1. Preparation is half the battle – the importance of planning in education

Planning is often viewed as one of the key elements for a successful and efficient learning process. It outlines the journey we want our learners to take so they can gain something valuable from the experience. At the very least, our plans should answer the following questions:

1. What do I want my learners to gain? What do they want and need?

2. How will the learning process be facilitated?

3. How will we know we achieved our goals?

In terms of the time span, we can differentiate between long-term planning (course or curriculum design), medium-term planning ("scheme of work", a series of connected lessons), and short-term planning (lesson/unit/session/workshop design). Even though the scope for each type is very different, we can use the same questions in any of the planning we do. However, given that lessons are directly connected to our performance and our learners' performance, their outlines should be planned in more detail.

The term "lesson" in this context is most often understood as a [single class](#) or part of a course, but the process and key elements of lesson planning can be applied to different types of learning experiences in non-formal education (such as workshop or session design or any other type of unit). Keeping that in mind, the working definition of a **lesson plan** we chose for this handbook is that it is **"a concise, working document which outlines the teaching and learning that will be conducted within a single lesson"[1]**. In online education, a course is most often divided into modules or instructional units, and modules are divided into lessons (the smallest units). Depending on how the course is designed, the modules can be approached as lessons, and the principles presented here can be similarly applied to them.

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[1] Butt (2006: 21), *Lesson planning*, 2 ed.

Lesson planning attends to the objectives of a course (or a different type of learning process). It serves as a tool to guide both the educators and the learners. On one hand, effective planning enhances the educator's performance and provides a meaningful and engaging learning environment. Having a clear vision helps educators tackle potential management issues during the learning process, which can positively affect their confidence. Research (e.g., on university students and pre-service teachers) shows that planning educational strategies increases the effectiveness of their work and the educational process in general[2]. On the other hand, sharing the outline of a good lesson plan with the learners helps them as well, as they benefit from having a clear overview of their learning process – it can help with their planning strategies, motivation, and accountability.

Learner-centred lesson planning enhances the quality of educational processes and makes them more effective and purposeful. According to some authors[3], lesson planning functions as a tool that:

- boosts learners' self-confidence,
- helps educators to organise instructional elements to be used for learning,
- enables educators to monitor, evaluate and adjust their activities,
- helps educators and learners to adopt reflective thinking.

Design: freepik.com

In short, **having a clear and concise idea of what you want to achieve, how you want to achieve it, and how you will monitor the progress helps both you as an educator and your learner to dive into the process more confidently and to attain a sense of ownership.**

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[2] Womack et al. (2015), *Most Effective Practices in Lesson Planning*; Süral & Dedebali (2021), *The Predicitve Power of the Curriculum Literacy Levels*

[3] Senemoglu (2003) in Süral (2019:1), *An Examination of Pre-Service Teachers' Competencies in Lesson Planning.*

2. What should you plan and how should you plan? The role of the educator

Lesson planning is an **intersection between content knowledge (what is taught) and pedagogical knowledge (how it is taught and evaluated)**. Good lessons reflect the educator's understanding of the principles of quality pedagogic practice, of how a particular group learns (children, youth, adults), his/her ability to learn from their experience and his/her understanding of why certain things happen during the learning process. Much of the challenges that occur during the learning process can be related to the lack of effective planning and preparation[4].

But how much planning is enough planning?

Some practitioners advocate for planning each lesson fully, explicitly, and in writing[5]. This position views detailed plans as a space for ensuring more confidence and better risk management in teaching and learning. Others question the necessity of detailed planning, claiming that extensive written preparation might have a negative influence on pedagogical effectiveness. The key issue for them is certainty, not exhaustiveness, so more emphasis should be put on meeting the objectives[6]. Here, it is important to understand that **a lesson plan should serve as a practical instrument**, and not be a burden in the process.

Before you start planning, keep in mind:
- You cannot predict and control everything that happens during the learning process. However, there is a high chance that the more structured your plan is, the more successful and meaningful the learning experience will be.
- You will need to accept responsibility for possible modifications in the process according to your learners' needs and progress.
- Your plans should be in line with your individual style. Authenticity is an important factor in the success of your work.

What should you plan?

Lesson planning, like course design, is often viewed through the journey analogy. **You need to define the key points of your learner's journey in advance**: the starting point, the final destination, the mode of travel, and the "check-in" mechanisms. The journey analogy is further explained below and aligned with the necessary steps the educator must take before the take-off. The steps also describe the key elements of a good lesson plan.

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[4] Butt (2006), *Lesson planning*, 2 ed.
[5] Haynes (2007), *100 Ideas for Lesson Planning*; Haynes (2010), *The Complete Guide to Lesson Planning and Preparation*
[6] Womack et al. (2015: 21), *Most Effective Practices in Lesson Planning.*

Parts of the journey to be defined	The steps the educator has to take to plan the journey
What is the starting point? *(the learners' previous knowledge and experience, their expectations, specific needs and resources they can invest…)*	**Needs analysis and baseline assessment.**
What is the final destination? *(the knowledge, skills, attitudes or values they will gain during and after the process is done)*	**Set objectives and learning outcomes.**
What is the mode of travel? *(how fast will the process be, which methods and activities will lead the learner to their destination…)*	**Decide on the pace, the methods, the activities, instructional and self-learning materials, the homework…**
How will you and your learners know you got there? *(the mechanisms to monitor if you got to the right spots, and what was gained on the way)*	**Prepare a plan for monitoring progress, develop assessment and evaluation instruments**

And who are you, the educator, in this journey? Surely you cannot always be in control, as you need to provide autonomy to your learners in their own learning process. You do, however, have the leading role in planning and designing the journey, so you can take that time to reflect on the different roles you will be having during the process.

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3. How to create a perfect lesson plan (or a perfectly good lesson plan)

There is no definite answer to what the perfect plan should be comprised of. **In our view, the perfect plan is one that suits your needs, and ultimately, benefits the learning process.** A good lesson plan should contain (at least): <u>the needs assessment and baseline assessment, learning objectives and outcomes, methods and context, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms</u>.

What you need to plan depends on the context in which you work, the needs of your learners, and the setting in which a particular lesson is held (for example, face-to-face or online). Keep in mind that the context might change depending on different factors: the progress of your learners, your relationship with them, other stakeholders' interests, changes in available resources… Therefore, it is also very important to monitor and revise your plans in line with the "bigger picture" (the objectives of your course or programme and other objectives that might be related to that particular lesson).

One of the most extensive lists of elements of a lesson plan (used in formal education) was compiled by Anthony Haynes (below). In addition to this framework, lesson plans often contain administrative data on the learners (the number of learners, their age, the date and the venue where the lesson will take place, etc.).

Framework for perfect planning

Appendix B: Framework for perfect planning

1. Aims
2. Objectives
3. Assessment data on pupils
4. Scope and content
5. Pedagogical methods
6. Teacher's expectations
7. Learning activities
8. Homework
9. Differentiation of learning
10. Progression in learning
11. Other curricular links
12. Time
13. Space
14. Resources
15. Language
16. Ancillary staff
17. Risks
18. Assessment
19. Evaluation method(s)
20. Review procedure(s)

Framework for perfect planning *(Haynes, 2010: 168)*

The thought of planning every lesson according to 20 or more segments probably sounds overwhelming to most educators, but it is important to remember that the plan should serve you and your learners and that **ultimately, the choice is yours**.

In terms of both formal and non-formal education, the abovementioned elements can be grouped to represent a structure for a good lesson plan that can be applied to other types of units as well (workshops, sessions, etc.): **1. Baseline and needs assessment, 2. Learning objectives and outcomes, 3. Content, pedagogical methods and activities, 4. Differentiation in learning, 5. Resources – time, space, instructional materials, and 6. Monitoring progress, assessment, and evaluation**.

Some of the elements are discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 (*Course design*), as they represent a framework for both long-term and short-term planning. Here we will examine each of them in the context of lesson planning.

1. Baseline and needs assessment

To ensure the learning process will be meaningful to the learners, the planning should start from their interests, needs, and existing resources (knowledge, skills, attitudes, the time they have at their disposal, their employment and financial status – if relevant, and other relevant resources).

Needs assessment refers to the process of gathering data on the knowledge, abilities, interests, or attitudes of our target group. It can be done through an indirect approach (like mapping existing research) or through direct contact with the target group (surveys, interviews, focus groups, working groups, etc.). In terms of lesson planning, it should be viewed as part of a broader context – course design, training design, or other types of educational programmes. This means that you don't have to assess your learners' needs before every lesson – your plans will be based on previously collected data. Before the beginning of the course, the needs assessment should provide you with enough information to define every key aspect of the lesson. You can even do smaller-scale needs assessments during the learning process to keep track of the changes in your learners' needs and to plan for modifications.

Baseline assessment is a process of gathering primary data on the learners' knowledge and experience in a specific area (e.g., how much they know about women's rights movements or what experience they have in advocacy). This can be done through questionnaires, tests, quizzes, informal observations from the educator, etc., usually at the beginning of a course or a thematic unit (a series of connected lessons). It functions as a reference point at the beginning, during and after the course or programme has finished, so you can use it to monitor your learners' progress. Make sure you communicate the point of the baseline assessment to your learners, as this will support their sense of ownership over the learning process, and ease possible negative feelings they might have toward "knowledge tests".

2. Objectives and outcomes

The terminology related to **goals, objectives, and outcomes** in education is still not universally agreed upon. Even Bloom's taxonomy revision authors state that the "objective is not the only term used to describe an intended student learning outcome"[7]. <u>We opted for including a distinction between the three that, in our view, makes a coherent framework for planning a learning process</u>:

1. Learning goals are the "highest" category and convey what educators, and other stakeholders (e.g., project donors, the government, or another group from the community), want to achieve as a result of the course or learning process (e.g., *To increase media literacy and critical thinking among international trainers*). They shape the way you will define the objectives and outcomes for each lesson.

2. Learning objectives are educator-centred and focused on what the educator wants to do to achieve the course goals. They can be written in relation to the content and methods (example: *To discuss different types of fake news and the tools used to recognize them*), or in terms of what is expected from the learners (example: *To increase the trainers' understanding of different types of fake news and how to use specific tools to differentiate between them*). They are broader than learning outcomes.

3. Learning outcomes are learner-centred and tell us what the learners will be able to do after they've gone through a learning process/experience (example: *At the end of the lesson, the trainers will be able to **categorize** fake news according to at least 5 different types of fake news*). They should be **measurable, concise, meaningful, relevant to the learners, and achievable**.

You can find out more about the definitions and their relationships in this [video]. Regardless of the terminology, the concept of defining learning outcomes is used in all forms of education. Setting and communicating the outcomes to your learners gives them a clear idea of what is expected and more control over their learning process.

One of the most widely used, and probably the most well-known tool for writing learning outcomes is **Bloom's taxonomy – a taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing,** developed in 1956. It provides a framework for categorizing learning outcomes (originally referred to as educational objectives) and is based on **four general types of knowledge[8]**: <u>factual</u> (knowledge of "bits of information", e.g., terminology), <u>conceptual</u> (knowledge of complex and organised forms, e.g., categories and principles), <u>procedural</u> (knowledge of "how-to", e.g., certain techniques, or methods) and <u>metacognitive</u> (self-knowledge and strategic knowledge). It follows **a hierarchy from low-order to higher-order thinking skills**, presented through different categories. You can find out more about how to write good learning outcomes and different examples in this [handout] or this [video].

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[7] Anderson & Krathwohl (2001: 18), *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: a revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives.*
[8] Anderson & Krathwohl (2001: 27)

In writing the outcomes, you can use the following checklist:

Checklist for writing learning outcomes
Use the following checklist to help you as you write your learning outcomes.

When writing learning outcomes, I need to:
☐ Focus on outcomes, not processes
☐ Start each outcome with an action verb
☐ Use only one action verb per learning outcome
☐ Avoid vague verbs such as *know* and *understand*
☐ Check that the verbs used reflect the level of learning required
☐ Ensure that outcomes are observable and measurable
☐ Write the outcomes in terms of what the learner does, not what the instructor does
☐ Check that the outcomes reflect knowledge, skills, or attitudes required in the workplace
☐ Include outcomes that are woven into the entire course (such as *work effectively in teams*)
☐ Check that there are the appropriate number of outcomes (no more than three per major topic)
☐ List the suboutcomes for each outcome
☐ Check that the outcomes fit within program and course goals

Taken from: British Columbia Institute of Technology (2010:8)

In 2008, an interesting addition to the taxonomy was presented, stating that **some verbs are specific to the online learning environment**. Some of the examples for different categories of skills include[9]:

- **Remembering**: bullet pointing, bookmarking, "googling", etc.
- **Understanding**: advanced and Boolean searching, tagging, annotating, etc
- **Applying**: running and operating (e.g., an app), uploading, sharing, etc.
- **Analysing**: mashing (mashups), linking, reverse-engineering, etc.
- **Evaluating**: commenting and reflecting, posting, moderating, validating, etc.
- **Creating**: programming, filming, podcasting, remixing, publishing, etc.

Apart from the cognitive domain, the taxonomies for **affective and psychomotor** types of learning were developed. You can find more about them here and here.
Another important thing to note is that learning can be unintended, and it can be described by the category of **expressive outcomes.** They can be the results of activities that had no intended or explicit learning outcomes, but the learning happened anyway (e.g., visiting a virtual exhibition, seeing a theatre play, etc.), and they usually complement or modify existing knowledge (read more about the theory here). The opportunities for unintended learning are great within the digital realm where the access to information is faster, but expressive outcomes are harder to observe and monitor in online education. Make sure you ask your learners for feedback and monitor their learning process regularly.

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[9] Churches (2008), *Bloom's Digital Taxonomy*

3. Content and pedagogical methods

Content and methods should stem from the learning objectives and outcomes. They are intertwined with all other elements of planning too (e.g., your choice of methods might depend on the space and time you have at your disposal).

In course design, **you can organise content in different ways** (again, depending on the objectives and outcomes you set): you can cover topics chronologically (e.g., procedures, processes, timelines…), categorically (e.g., introducing *energizers, warmers, and coolers* as categories of managing your learners' attention and energy levels), through cause and effect (e.g., in talking about policy), from simple to complex (e.g., covering a definition and main aspects of a concept, and then its application), etc. You can find more examples [here](#), or in our chapter on *Course design*. Same strategies can be used for unit or lesson planning, but on a smaller scale. A common practice in delivering content is **chunking** (breaking it down into smaller sections), very often used in online courses. **Each lesson should cover one or two key concepts**, especially if they are new to your learners. A good way to enhance learning when introducing a new concept is by connecting it to the learners' previous knowledge (ask them what they know, use analogies and examples, and consult the results of the baseline assessment).

The methods should be explicitly stated in the lesson plan, and there should be a short description of the activities. Before choosing the methods, make sure you have a clear vision of the type of learning experience you want to implement (active learning, cooperative learning, e-learning…). There is a myriad of teaching and learning methods you can choose for your lessons (to name a few most widely known ones: group discussion, debate, lectures/presentations, role-playing, theatre, dramatization, art-based projects, video creation, case studies, flipped classroom, educational games, group/individual research projects, storytelling, problem-solving activities…). While your choice will heavily depend on whether they're implemented in an online or in-person setting, a few key points should be noted for each situation:
- Make sure the methods are in line with your style and reflect authenticity,
- Vary the methods in a series of connected lessons as much as you can to include different learning styles and preferences,
- Make sure you are familiar with the proper use of the methods you choose,
- Learn all about the digital tools you want to include before putting them into practice.

4. Differentiation in learning

In planning your lessons, always keep in mind that one size does not fit all, because your learners might differ according to their motivation, readiness to learn, abilities, personal traits, cultural backgrounds, etc. The needs and baseline assessment should give you a direction in setting necessary adjustments for your learners, but they cannot give you a ready-made list of differentiation methods.

Since differentiation is often seen as *a way of thinking* about educational processes, it may require changes and improvisation along the way. Still, there are strategies you can apply in the planning phase, and you can always <u>outline possible scenarios and how to address them</u> (e.g., a group of learners will finish a task much earlier, or someone might not want to participate in an activity).

<u>You can work on differentiation through</u>[10]:
- **Content** (e.g., learners choose to work on a different topic to reach the same learning outcomes),
- **Process** (e.g., learners have different tasks, but work on the same content),
- **Product** (e.g., learners create different results (essay, infographic, video) based on the same content or learning outcome),
- **Affect / Environment** (e.g., the setting in which they are going to work – in a group, individually…).

<u>Another division can be done according to</u>[11]:
- **The outcomes** (same task, different outcomes/results of the task),
- **The tasks** (different tasks based on the same learning outcomes),
- **The support** your learners need (different levels of support).

Most of the resources dealing with differentiation come from formal education. Explore Carol Tomlinson's [diagram], read this [article] or watch this [video] to understand more about why and how to differentiate. Think about how you can apply different strategies in working with [learners with disabilities]. Learn more about strategies like [scaffolding], [cubing], [tiering], [Think-tac-toe] or [project-based learning] to get ideas for your lessons.

5. Resources: time, space, educational materials

Resources should be mapped, and their use should be planned in parallel with the methods and activities, as they have a great influence on each other.
Time is one of the crucial things to handle. You can find out more about the most effective strategies in our chapter on *Time management*. In this section, we will just briefly point out some of the methods that can help you handle time productively related to the planning and preparation phase:
- Act it out: before you present activities or instruct your learners in an asynchronous setting, try it out yourself and record the time,
- Pay special attention to planning the start ("the pitch deck" or your introductory presentation in person or recorded online), as it usually sets the tone for the rest of the lesson,
- Compare the tasks for your learners to other everyday tasks you do to get another input for approximation,
- Make the plan more flexible so you can efficiently manage the risks,
- Plan best and worst-case scenarios.

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[10] Tomlinson (1999)
[11] Haynes (2010)

Pay attention to planning **the dynamic, the rhythm, and the pace**. It is important to vary the tasks and to take different learning needs into account. You shouldn't be going too fast and plan too many activities in one lesson, but you should also be careful not to give your learners the opportunity for distractions or boredom. Try introducing milestones within a lesson or a series of lessons. Acknowledging that we finished something and are moving forward gives us a sense of completion and achievement.

Lessons can be delivered in **physical or online spaces** (conferencing platforms or LMS platforms). Some key factors to consider in physical spaces are the size of the room, the shape, the layout, the technologies you have at your disposal, etc. The same lesson can turn out to be very different in different spaces, so it would be beneficial to know as much as you can about the venue. It will also help you plan the time, the methods, and the needed support for the learners (plan for inclusion and mind possible barriers). Online spaces can vary depending on whether the lesson is delivered in a synchronous or asynchronous setting. One of the challenges here is that while there are quite a few free online conferencing and LMS platforms, you might have different needs and plans for different lessons which will require paid features. Apart from that, the biggest challenge is the internet connection and technical conditions your learners have. Keep in mind that although you cannot have an influence on that, good planning and preparation will help you deal with the challenges in the delivery. Here you can also plan best and worst-case scenarios and come up with alternatives for possible problems.

Educational (instructional) materials can be ready-made or self-created and can vary from different audio and visual media (videos, presentations, charts, maps…) to written materials (books and textbooks, articles, handouts…). They are equally important in face-to-face and online settings, as they guide and help the learning process. In cases of online asynchronous courses, however, they are the main source of instruction for the learners, so you should plan them in more detail. **Planning self-study materials** shouldn't be seen as just an addition to the process, as self-learning should also be a meaningful and engaging experience. Self-study materials can enhance the learning experience or serve as a preparation for the next lesson (for example, in flipped classrooms). The tasks should vary and have their learning outcomes (read more in our chapter *Assigning and creating self-study materials*).

Here are a few important questions you should answer before deciding on which materials to use in your lessons (both in-person and online):

- o Is the material suitable in terms of its visual appearance (font, colours, line spacing, etc.)?
- o Is the language user-friendly?
- o How are the concepts and ideas presented? Do they follow a logical flow? Are they appropriate for your target group?
- o Can the material be modified according to your learners' specific needs?

6. Monitoring progress, assessment, and evaluation

Even though monitoring, assessment, and evaluation are often seen as end parts of an educational process, they should be carefully planned from the beginning, as they serve as a basis for improving the ongoing and the next learning cycle.

Monitoring progression is done throughout the learning process, e.g., during lessons, weekly, monthly, etc. It can help you decide when your learners are ready for the next step (monitoring learning outcomes), how to make the transition from one piece of learning to another, and how to build on their existing knowledge and skills.

Assessment can be defined as "the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about learners' responses to educational tasks"[12]. It serves as a tool to get to know your learners, give feedback to the learners ("feedforward"), encourage self-assessment in learners, and identify strengths and challenges in preparing for future work.

> While planning assessments, **keep in mind these steps to ensure efficiency**:
> - Decide on the purpose of assessment,
> - Choose the questions carefully ('the art of inquiry' is an important soft skill here!),
> - Use a variety of methods and questions,
> - Review the relationship between assessment methods and learning outcomes.
>
> Adapted from Haynes (2010) - *The Complete Guide to Lesson Planning and Preparation.*

Here are a few techniques you can use for monitoring and assessment: reflection, revision, entry and exit tickets, summary stories, and others. Among the many roles assessment can have, it can also have an evaluation role, so it can provide information that can be used to make judgements about the effectiveness or quality of different aspects of the learning process. This means both progression and assessment data can serve as a basis for evaluation.

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[12] Lambert & Lines, 2009 in Haynes (2010: 152)

Evaluation refers to a broader perspective and involves looking at all the factors that influence the learning process, such as course design, materials, methodology, performance, and assessment[13]. It is primarily focused on determining the quality, effectiveness, value, and importance of different elements. In education, it should be done through a comprehensive and holistic approach and consider not only what was planned, but also what occurred beyond your objectives and outcomes.

Some practitioners[14] suggest the following useful self-evaluation techniques for educators: assumption hunting (critical examination of the gaps between the theories we believe in, and the ones we actually use), action planning (developing a set of questions and actions for a particular aspect of your practice that will guide you in experimenting and implementing changes), and keeping a reflective journal. Getting feedback from your learners (and colleagues, if possible) is also very important: choose one aspect of your lesson and have them give you examples (three good things, one thing that was missing…), have your colleagues give you feedback on your portfolio, use techniques such as "traffic lights" or "mood meters" with your learners, send out questionnaires… Most importantly, use various methods and include different groups to grasp the whole process successfully.

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13 Harris & McCann (1994: 2), as in Mathew & Poehner (2013: 3)
14 Kahn and Walsh, 2006, in Haynes, 2010

4. Lesson planning in face-to-face, synchronous, and asynchronous education

Face-to-face education	Synchronous education	Asynchronous education
Needs analysis and baseline assessment can be done through an indirect or direct approach. The indirect approach is the same in any educational setting (e.g., exploring research), but the direct approach (interviews, focus groups) is fairly different in face-to-face settings. Here you can set up meetings with your learners during which you can promptly react to any verbal and non-verbal cues. If you opt for a questionnaire for needs assessment or a test for baseline assessment, you can offer immediate support to your learners in real time. In face-to-face settings, <u>it is usually easier to monitor whether your learners understand what they need to do and whether they can follow your instructions</u>.	The methods here are similar to face-to-face education. When organising a meeting (focus group, working group, interview) using a video conferencing tool, <u>keep in mind the safety measures</u> (use a password for the meeting, enable or disable certain options, etc.), <u>inform your learners on the purpose and the preferred prerequisites and ask for their consent</u> (e.g., they will need a camera or the meeting will be recorded). <u>Plan for possible scenarios</u> in which some aspects won't go according to your plan. Baseline assessment can be interpreted as formal assessment (quizzes, tests…), so <u>make sure you communicate its purpose beforehand</u> so that your learners feel safe and follow all your instructions.	In asynchronous education you might want to rely more on research findings and past experiences in needs assessment. If you plan to do needs and baseline assessment using only asynchronous methods, make sure you <u>communicate their purpose and instructions on how to participate explicitly, in a video or in writing, and make that available to the learners at all times</u>. Informal observation as a tool for baseline assessment is very different in an asynchronous setting. For example, you won't be able to monitor group work as you usually would, so <u>you need to apply different strategies</u> (e.g., monitor discussions on a forum, ask your learners to reflect more in writing, etc.).
In face-to-face settings, you can plan **learning objectives and outcomes** according to the known principles and practices (presented in the previous section). On average, one major topic of your course (covered in a series of lessons) should have up to three learning outcomes, so <u>one lesson could have one to three (sub)outcomes</u> related to them. Make sure you write <u>one verb per outcome</u> to preserve clarity. The verbs you choose should match the levels of learning you planned and be measurable.	In online synchronous educational settings, you can follow the same principles as in face-to-face settings, but since the online meetings/sessions in real time should be shorter and include more breaks, the objectives and outcomes should be adjusted accordingly. Set <u>one to three outcomes per lesson</u>, and make sure they are measurable and observable. If you want to include higher order cognitive categories or outcomes from the affective domain, it is better to <u>set one outcome per lesson</u>.	Since monitoring the acquisition of learning objectives and outcomes in real time in online asynchronous education is oftentimes not possible, and the support you can offer to your learners is limited, you need to apply different strategies: <u>the outcomes should be explicitly stated and accessible to your learners, as well as your instructions, and you should include more monitoring, feedback and reflection strategies</u>. Again, <u>one lesson should cover one to three learning (sub)outcomes</u>.
In any type of setting, **content and methods** should be explicitly stated in the lesson plan. Make sure you first organise content delivery (simple to complex, cause and effect, chronologically, categorically…) in relation to a series of connected lessons, and then decide on the content for one particular lesson. <u>Each lesson should cover one or two key concepts, and a limited amount of new information</u>	Content delivery and methods are very different in online and face-to-face settings. You should <u>plan for proper use of chunking</u> (breaking down content into smaller sections) and <u>use less complex strategies</u> because of the limited screen time. Combine content delivery with self-study materials for your learners. <u>You might want to transfer some of the methods from the face-to-face setting, so</u> think about possible	Content delivery is crucial for a successful online asynchronous lesson. Here <u>the "chunks" of content should be even smaller</u>. <u>Include as many different content delivery methods as you can</u> (visuals, texts, videos, audio materials) <u>as well as interactive tools</u> (games, quizzes, tests, flashcards). Since communication with other learners can be very beneficial, <u>try to include a space for interaction and community</u>

(e.g., 5-7 in new vocabulary). Your choice of <u>methods should derive from the intersection between the learning outcomes and the content</u>, but keep in mind all other aspects of lesson planning (differentiation, resources, assessment…).	modifications (e.g., breakout rooms for group work), <u>but don't forget to use the tools and resources that might not be available "offline"</u>. Most importantly, ensure everyone can participate actively and equally.	building (FB group, forums, discussion boards, peer-to-peer reviews…). Before the planned start of the lesson, you might want to ask a colleague to test it to see if everything is working properly and the instructions are clear and accessible.
Differentiation can be done in relation to the content, the process or the tasks, the product, the environment and the support your learners need. Before planning, <u>think about your learners' needs, interests, readiness and learning profile, and adjust the learning outcomes accordingly</u>. Make sure you <u>include enough variety in your content and methods, and plan for different monitoring and assessment strategies</u>. Explore how you can use the time and space you have at your disposal, as well as the support in real time you can give to your learners, since those are the biggest advantages in face-to-face environments.	Planning screen time requires more adjustments for everyone, regardless of their specific needs. <u>Plan for shorter sessions, longer or more frequent breaks, and include tasks that require body movements or time away from the screen</u>. Pay special attention to your learners' environment or the support they might need. If possible, set up extra time for those who need more support of any kind. <u>Prepare possible modifications or alternative solutions if your learners cannot participate in real time due to technical or other difficulties</u>. Again, think of how you can use their preparation time or follow-ups.	Asynchronous education allows for many types of differentiation, but it might require more of your time and can be limited to the learning platform you are using. Since the learners can finish the lessons at their own pace, this setting allows them to adjust their environment according to their needs. To make your lessons more accessible, <u>you can set up different levels for outcomes and tasks, and give your learners more choice</u>. Use <u>a variety of instructional materials</u> to cover for different preferences and abilities. In addition, you can explore how to <u>include assistive technologies</u> to your materials (text-to-speech, graphic organizers…).
Resources are closely related to the delivery of content and methods, and sometimes even influence the decision on what to include in a lesson (e.g., you might not use some methods if you don't have adequate space). Although they have their limitations, in face-to-face settings <u>time and space are easier to manage and modify</u>. <u>Use various instructional materials to include different needs and preferences</u>.	The online spaces (platforms) you use <u>determine your choice of methods and materials</u>. Make sure you explore all the options (and if you need to pay for certain features) before deciding on how your lesson will be delivered in real time. The time you have is more limited since screen time activities require more adjustments, more breaks, etc. <u>The materials all have to be in digital format and accessible to every learner</u>.	Time can be a great asset in this setting, since the learners can work at their own pace. However, this means they have to manage time on their own, so <u>make sure you include notes about how long something will take</u>. In terms of space and materials, <u>you don't have to limit your lessons to one online platform</u>. Use all available resources for any purposes that will help your learners grow and achieve the outcomes.
Monitoring progress and assessment allow for various methods and techniques in face-to-face education. You can observe how your learners behave during lessons, how they interact with others, their non-verbal cues, etc., and see the changes in their behaviours or attitudes more easily. Make sure you <u>plan your short monitoring sessions for each lesson</u>. It would be beneficial to <u>encourage evaluation and self-evaluation</u> throughout the course, so plan your lessons accordingly.	Plan for interval monitoring, assessment and evaluation, but <u>make sure you use short activities related to them in your online sessions</u> as well. It might be harder to monitor certain aspects during the lessons (e.g., group work if they're using breakout rooms or non-verbal cues with camera off), but you can still use <u>different efficient methods for feedback with the tools you have at your disposal</u> (e.g., emojis, video filters, chat, quizzes, tests…). This will provide data for evaluation and can be used for self-evaluation.	Gathering data for monitoring, assessment and evaluation in real time is almost impossible in an online asynchronous setting. This is why you need to <u>plan for more frequent and shorter activities for monitoring and assessment</u>, and <u>set separate tasks for reflection, evaluation, and self-evaluation</u>. You can set up a mechanism for tracking progress that your learners can always keep track of. Try to <u>include a variety of mechanisms and tools and make sure you give effective and timely feedback</u>!

5. Challenges in planning online lessons

Difficulties can arise in any planning any component of a lesson. The complexity of lesson planning should be approached by examining each element separately, but keep in mind that they are all connected and interact with each other. Here are some of the major challenges in planning online lessons and tips on how to approach them:

Challenge	Tips
Designing a plan directly related to your learners' needs and interests It is hard to include every learner's need and interest into every lesson, which is especially true if you cannot reach a particular group before the course starts.	You can rely more on existing research on your target group but try to plan for at least some baseline and needs assessment – you can plan one lesson just for that at the beginning. Include short quizzes and various feedback mechanisms to modify the lessons as you go.
Differentiation in learning It is hard to adapt one lesson to fit every learner individually, especially in online settings in which your learners might have more distractions in their surroundings, more technical issues, and a lack of immediate support (if needed).	Include as many different methods and activities as you can, as well as materials that arouse creativity and interest, and provide explanatory and interpretative materials to clarify the subject matter[15]. Keep in mind that differentiation is a way of thinking, and that sometimes small modifications are enough (e.g., include a transcript for the videos you post). Include enrichment materials: allow the learners to dig deeper in self-directed learning, include various reflection and self-evaluation methods, and ask for feedback regularly.
Time management Time allotment and controlling time are considered among the most difficult aspects of lesson planning[16].	Be considerate of the learning pace and rhythm in asynchronous settings: be consistent in uploading assignments, give the learners enough time for preparation, give an overview of the lessons, include to-do lists, give your learners guidelines on how to manage distractions in your working space, and give them mechanisms for monitoring their progress. In planning for a synchronous setting, you can act out some of the activities, decide on a timekeeper in advance, plan for enough breaks to keep the focus clear, and plan for core/base and extra activities.
Assessing and monitoring what is "hidden" Keeping track of the affective domain, unintentional learning and changes in values and attitudes is always challenging.	Ask for feedback in writing the outcomes from your colleagues, and plan for reflection, self-reflection and monitoring techniques that can serve as a base for assessment. Observe your learners' behaviours and interactions with others and include collaborative assessments where possible (might be challenging in the asynchronous setting).

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[15] Seifert (2021:6), *Students' perceptions of online teaching and learning*.
[16] Srihidayanti (2015: 260), *Teachers' Difficulties in Lesson Planning: Designing and Implementing*.

6. Questions for reflection

1. *Which part of lesson planning seems to be most challenging for you? Why? Which tools and strategies can you use as solutions?*
2. *What are the biggest differences in preparing lessons for face-to-face and online educational settings?*
3. *If you needed to list 5 tips for efficient planning for other educators, what would they be?*

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