

Factors Contributing to Teachers' Application of Lesson Plans in Primary Education

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Abstract

This research briefly reports the factors influencing teachers' application of lesson plans at the primary school level in Indonesia. This factors were derived from observations in one class over one semester, following two meetings. Using qualitative method, the researcher observed the teacher and the classroom setting. Additionally, the teacher's lesson plans and videos of her teaching were collected. The teacher instructed students using the whiteboard and presented video related to Jakarta's culture. While the differences between the planned lessons and the actual teaching were indentified, the study highlights two factors that may contribute to the variations in teachers' applications: burnout and personality characteristics.

Keywords: *lesson plan, teacher's application, teacher's burnout, teacher's personality characteristics*

Introduction

Lesson planning is a critical and integral part of the teaching and learning process, significantly enhancing the overall effectiveness of educational practices (Nadlir et al., 2024). By implementing well-structured lesson plans, educators can foster active student engagement and improve learning outcomes. Moreover, effective lesson planning prepares teachers to adapt to unexpected classroom disruptions, ensuring that instructional goals remain achievable (Cicek, 2013). It not only support classroom management but also empowers teachers to create a more dynamic and responsive learning environment, ultimately benefiting students' educational experiences (Lesson Planning, 2020; Abdulayeva, 2024). Unfortunately, classroom instruction does not always align with the plans that teachers have developed. Some teachers I interviewed indicated that real classroom teaching is often dynamic and differs significantly from their initial expectations. This discrepancy highlights the necessity for teachers to remain flexible and develop skills that allow them to adjust plans in real-time, thereby enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom.

In this paper, I reported my analysis of a recorded classroom instruction from a primary school teacher. Teacher's teaching plan was also evaluated to triangulate the first cycle analysis. The paper is developed into several sections. The following 'setting and participants' describes the school where teachers conducted the teaching activity, and characterizes the teachers. The section on methods includes the subsections of 'the qualitative method used' and 'the study narratives' describing the teaching and learning processes as in the video, and the discussion section provides my justification of the process and the assumption of two factors that contributed to teachers' different application than the one they had planned. Finally, the conclusion section summarizes the paper.

The setting and participants

The teaching and learning activity took place at Lenteng Agung primary school in 2020. A female teacher – in her mid-forties, was shown in the video and she was teaching a group of 6th grade students. The teacher and the students are Indonesian, and they learn English as a foreign language. The teacher possessed a master degree in English education from a faculty of teacher training in Jakarta. It is important to mention that teachers frequently used the native Bahasa Indonesia to teach the English lessons.

Methods

This study was a mini qualitative research, aiming to understand the difference between teachers' planning and the actual teaching practices. The data were collected from the recorded classroom instruction from the teacher participant and her lesson plan. The qualitative analysis was performed on these two sources of data. It is important to note that the video has two-minute duration making it difficult to generate a complete view of the teaching process. This is to acknowledge the limitation of the teaching analysis presented in this paper.

Classroom Narratives and Discussion

In this paper, the focus of my observation was on teacher's application of the lesson plan. The lesson plan has helped the teachers support students in achieving their learning goals, as it has a specific framework based on students' needs (Özdemir, 2019). It usually involves goals, knowledge, sequencing, activity procedures, implementations, and assessments (Rye & Sparks,

2022). This structured approach not only enhances the teaching process but also aligns with the findings that highlight the importance of lesson plans in facilitating effective learning experiences (Farhang et al., 2023).

In the video, the teacher was shown to present some materials on the whiteboard and with exciting videos. The teaching topic concerned with the Jakarta Culture. The teacher taught the English language to the students in Bahasa Indonesia, especially when she explained the materials and when opened and closed the classroom meeting. She taught and presented the material clearly to students.

The focus of the classroom instruction was to help the students to understand the grammar of future tense. It was expected that after learning the future tense, the students would be able to develop their writing skills. Also, students were taught to comprehend spoken and written instructions associated with words, phrases, and simple sentences thematically about Jakarta Culture. Not only that, in the video, teachers were shown to emphasise on the remembrance and the writing of particular words, phrases, and simple sentences of future tense based on appropriate contexts. The Jakarta Culture in the recent meetings was about Ondel-Ondel Lobang song. The teacher asked the students to pronounce future tense correctly; even in the middle of the teaching, she played games with them. In the last session, the teacher asked students to be in a group to make a paragraph about the materials. I had noticed that the scaffolding and reflecting also occurred between the teacher and the students.

My observation on the teaching activity revealed that the teacher had taught the students with her patience and the method was so exciting. This can be shown in her explanations and the lesson delivery that she repeatedly did, along with the games. Referring to the game, she applied the repetitive technique, but interestingly she encouraged all of the students to take part in it. So the teacher could engage with everyone and that the students could engage with the teacher and the class. In the last sessions, the teachers always did reflections on answering the teacher's books, and the teacher also allowed the students to question and answer among herself and the rest of the students.

I observed five primary behaviors in teacher's teaching activity (1) teacher lesson planning, (2) teacher scaffolding, (3) students empowerment in terms of writing skill, (4) dynamic interactions between teacher and students, (5) the nature of questioning and answering from class interactions (Widodo, 2008). However, it was apparent from the video that the teacher looked tired and her expression was so dull. Teacher was lack of smile, although in many occasions she was forced to do so. In reference to such teacher's expression, I assume two factors that influence teacher's teaching practice different from the one she planned, such as burnout and teachers' personality characteristics (Kokkinos, 2007).

Teacher's burnout

The first factor was the teacher's burnout and this involves time constraints and misbehavior. These aspects have provoked the teachers to feel more concerned and experience such burnout related to the school environment and students' behaviours. Controlling students' behaviours and the time constraints take a crucial role in terms of her burnout. Referring to students' misbehaviour, Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) argue that teachers feeling of frustration and stress tend to increase. The students' misbehaviour successfully affects the teachers' skills teach. In addition, this is congruent with a study from Kokkinos (2002), while he researched Cypriot teachers related to their burnout. Therefore, it is wise if the teachers can control and handle students' misbehaviour or discipline issues so they can minimize putting students at risk.

Further, students' behaviors promote the teacher's burnout and the lack of time. The burnout increased due to the lack of time. As a consequence, it may force the teacher to feel emotionally exhausted while teaching in the classroom. Not to mention that the teacher could not integrate her lesson plan completely as she ran out of time. It sometimes makes the teacher feel dissatisfied after teaching sessions. While the teacher had to face over thirty students in a class, she needed more time to teach, to apply such formative assessment. Unfortunately, sometimes schools are competing with each other, resulting in pressure on students to get good marks. Our current finding is that emotionally challenging settings could not engage students' needs and lack of time for delivering the materials.

Teacher's Personality Characteristics

The second factor was the teacher's characteristics, such as conscientiousness and extraversion (Kokkinos, 2007; Kim et al., 2019). Conscientiousness is the feeling of persistence, reflection, and involvement that one individual needs to activate. While extraversion means a high expectancy of motivation as well as a high level of interpersonal relationships. These two factors are obviously relevant to attain a goal (i.e., personal accomplishment and educational aims). In the current study, it seems like the teacher has applied these two aspects. The teacher has achieved the educational goals that her students can already understand and produce future tense. This result of this current findings also shares the same vein with a study from Nesari and Heidari (2014). They found that the teachers have a favorable view of lesson plan usage. The lesson plan has provided them to achieve their educational goals, along with its objective appropriately.

The teacher in our finding seems to have high levels of conscientiousness that she has a high level of responsibility and organization. Her complete lesson from the beginning of the teaching can be seen until the closing and rubric assessment. Moreover, the teacher is definitely disciplined as she starts the class at the exact time and ends it at the exact time. She could also achieve students' educational goals and had already made her students complete their tasks. In terms of extraversion, it can be demonstrated from how she reflects her materials in a classroom, together with her students. Klassen et al. (2017) pointed out that organization and planning play crucial roles in being well-mannered and effective teachers. This means that the teachers have the ability to organize skills, manage priorities, and manage time appropriately. Therefore, indicating conscientiousness and extraversion as crucial factors to encourage teachers' effectiveness in applying the lesson plan can be considered a wise matter.

Conclusion

To conclude, the teacher's factors in the current study were provoked by burnout and personality characteristics. Although the teacher has tried to deliver her best teachings, she still suffered from those stressors. To alleviate these issues, the school would be wise if the institution supports teachers materially and non-materially, giving the teachers additional incentives and providing a counseling room for the teacher accompanied by psychological experts. It may help the teachers to overcome their issues.

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