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## PROVIDING VARIATIONS OF LEARNING MODALITIES TO SCAFFOLD PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS IN DESIGNING LESSON PLAN

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**Abstract:** The present study reported self-reflective study on Instructional Design (ID) course at an English Education Department, East Java in a period of one semester. In this study, I did self-reflection throughout the whole process of my teaching program applying variations of learning modalities. This self-reflection examined the problems experienced by pre-service teachers in designing lesson plan, examined impacts of implementing variations of learning modality in scaffolding the construction of group and individual lesson plan, and described response made by course participants having joined ID course. The data collection technique used to elicit problems faced by pre-service teachers in designing lesson plan were document *analysis of lesson plan* and *conference* with pre-service teachers. *Field notes* and *diary* were used to collect data about how variations of learning modalities (i.e. modelling, peer collaboration, individual task) help pre-service teachers design lesson plan. Written reflection made by pre-service teachers was used to collect data about responses towards ID course. The findings revealed that variations of learning modalities could help pre-service teachers in the process of writing effective lesson plan. Through modelling, pre-service teachers could recognize deeply about the features of lesson plan structure. Through collaboration, students could acquire both social skills (communication skill, responsibility, trust, respect, care, and tolerance) and academic skills (ability to create effective lesson plan). In independent task, pre-service teachers became more self-directed learners and gained confidence in accomplishing the task. The result of critical reflection revealed that pre-service teachers responded positively towards variations of learning modalities provided in ID course.

**Keywords:** *learning modalities, scaffolding, lesson plan, Pre-Service EFL Teachers, Designing Lesson Plan*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Lesson planning constitutes a basic skill EFL teachers required to possess. Moore (2009:95) says that planning has two practical functions, i.e. it allows teachers to anticipate instructional needs in advance, and it provides a plan that directs classroom interactions. In addition, Richards & Bohlke (2001:37) ensures that lesson planning is a key feature of effective teaching as it provides a framework or roadmap for a lesson. To conclude, Richards & Bohlke, (2001:1) state that an effective lesson plan can motivate learners, provide useful and relevant language practice, and help learners gain confidence in using English.

Planning a lesson is difficult to do because it is a creative and complex process that involves not only an understanding of content and pedagogical knowledge, but also the ability to use critical thinking skills. Moore (2009:95)

adds that even experienced teachers spend many times planning to avoid becoming stale and routine. A survey to 23 teacher trainees by Tashevskaja (2007) revealed that students' teachers had difficulties in lesson planning. It was reported that 68% student teachers had difficulty in timing, 45 in anticipating problems, 18% in thinking of relevant solutions, 14% in formulating lesson aims, 36% in choosing appropriate contexts, and 36% had difficulty in sequencing activities. To overcome pre-service teachers' difficulties in the process of lesson design, Amalia and Imperiani (2013) did action research on the application of mentor coaching in assisting pre-service teachers in designing lesson plan. The findings revealed that mentor coaching could help pre-service teachers design effective lesson plan as indicated by their ability in formulating objectives and learning activities.

With regard to the difficulties in lesson planning, this self-reflection paper tries to report on the results of providing scaffolding techniques in the forms of variations of learning modalities in designing lesson plan. Learning modality is the learner's way of using sensory information to learn. Basically, there are three types of learning modalities: visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic modality (Holt & Kysilka, 2006:46). Visual learners tend to learn by observing and looking at pictures; auditory learners learn by being told information and responding to verbal instructions; and kinaesthetic learners learn by touching, doing, and moving.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Concept of Scaffolding

To achieve maximum learning outcomes, teacher plays an important role in facilitating the learning process. Using a social approach to learning, for example, the teacher can assist learners to compose texts that they could not compose independently (Read, 2010). The process of assisting a person to carry out a task that is unfamiliar or beyond his/her ability is called scaffolding.

In writing instruction, Majid, et.al. 2015 used modelling and joint production of text in scaffolding students to write a text. In a parallel mode, Read (2010) proposes IMSCI (inquiry, modelling, sharing, collaboration, independent) as model for scaffolding writing instruction. In inquiry, students are engaged in an inquiry of the characteristics of the text learned. Having understood the features of text, teacher can model how to write the intended text. Then, instructor and students co-write a text in the target genre. In collaborative writing, two or more students work together to produce text. Lastly, in independent writing, teacher releases responsibility to students because they are ready to write independently.

### 2.2 Scaffolding the Writing of Lesson Plan by Varying Learning Modalities

In the context writing lesson plan as the formal document of teaching, I adapt the forms of scaffolding for writing instruction to help pre-service teachers produce lesson plan in ID course. The variations of learning modalities to scaffold the writing of lesson plan consist of 1)

modelling a good lesson plan, 2) collaborative writing of lesson plan, 3) independent writing of lesson plan, and 4) critical reflection having learned to write lesson plan.

### 2.2 Modelling a Good Lesson Plan

In general the term modelling refers to the demonstration of physical act. But mental modelling refers to an act that is invisible (Pani, 2004). Modelling is a technique used to introduce the expected learning goal required to be achieved by students. In this technique, teachers may use a number of strategies, such as demonstration, presenting good and bad examples, showing a final product, explaining the expectation, transferring the image in the teacher's head to the learner's head, and incorporating the principles of learning – motivation, reinforcement, retention, and transfer (Holt & Kysilka, 2006).

There are a number of lesson planning models offered in the literature. Tyler's (1949) proposed a rational-linear framework comprising four steps: (1) specify objectives, (2) select learning activities, (3) organize learning activities, and (4) specify methods of evaluation. Tyler's model is supposed to be the conventional way in planning a lesson and up to the present time, this model is still popular among the English teachers in Indonesia. Similar to Indonesian context which adopts Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the approach to lesson planning by the teachers in South Africa was similar to the one recommended by Ralph Tyler (Rusznyak & Walton, 2011). In this model a student teacher is expected to take outcomes from policy documents as the starting points for lesson planning and adopt a backward design process, constructing a coherent learning process towards the attainment of the specified lesson outcomes and assessment standards. From policy documents, student teachers will obtain the statements of competencies as the standards targeted to be achieved in the lesson.

As recommended by TEFLIN (Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia) Association, philosophically scientific approach adopted by curriculum 2013 creates problems when implemented in the teaching of English. The scientific approach as a matter of fact is a

science process suitable for the teaching of science, whereas the teaching of English both in ESL/EFL contexts have adopted communicative language teaching as the state-of-the-art. In this case, the teaching of English in Indonesia has to adopt the genre-based approach as a form of communicative language teaching. With regard to this, students are introduced with the model of lesson plan following genre-based approach.

### 2.3 Collaborative Writing of Lesson Plan

Johann Amos Comenius (cited in Johnson, et.al. 1990) believed that students would benefit both by teaching and being taught by other students. For the sake of students' benefits, the crucial steps in cooperative learning group is the heterogeneous selection of group members consisting of 2-6 members. By doing so, it is expected that more earners will help the poor ones. Students will reach their maximum ability (zone of proximal development) if they are helped by more learners.

There are five essential components that must be included for small group learning to be truly cooperative: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual responsibility, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing (Johnson, et.al. 1990). *Positive interdependence* means that they sink and swim together. *Face-to-face promotive interaction* means students' opportunity to promote each other's learning and success by helping, assisting, supporting, encouraging, and praising each other's efforts to learn. *Individual accountability* exists when the performance of each individual student is assessed and the results given back to the group and the individual. *Interpersonal and small group skills* are skills that do not magically appear when they are needed. *Group processing* is defined as reflecting on a group session to (a) describe what member actions were helpful and unhelpful and (b) make decisions about what actions to continue or change.

### 2.4 Independent Writing of Lesson Plan

When students are already familiar with the model of lesson plan and have opportunities to construct the lesson plan via collaboration and intensive coaching, it is time for students to produce their own lesson plan individually. In

this case, scaffolding from teachers are made minimally.

Tanyeli and Kutter (2013) state that one of the aims of English language curriculum is the learner autonomy. Learner autonomy is understood as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981 in Qi, 2012). This means that students *have* and *hold* the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of their learning. This indicates that autonomous learners are able to self-regulate the direction of their own learning. Learners can determine their learning goal, design appropriate learning strategies, monitor learning progress, and evaluate learning outcomes.

### 2.5 Critical Reflection

For the betterment of teaching services, teachers are required to do critical reflection about teaching, which constitutes an essential part of teacher professional development activities. With regard to its importance, ID course provides course participants to do critical reflection based on what they experienced and felt having followed a set of learning scenarios designed in ID course.

In a reflective approach to teaching, "teachers and student-teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching" (Richards and Lockhart in Bailey, 2006:325). In the context of learning experiences of ID course, at the end collaborative and individual tasks in the construction of lesson plan, course participants were asked to do reflection based on what they did and felt about the teaching scenarios designed in ID course.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTION

In reference to the theoretical framework, the research questions to be answered in this study were formulated as follows:

- (1) What are problems faced by pre-service teachers in developing lesson plan?
- (2) How do variations of learning modalities help pre-service teachers design lesson plan?

- a) How modelling contributes towards an understanding of lesson plan characteristics?
  - b) How collaboration benefits pre-service teachers in designing group project of lesson design?
  - c) How independent task helps pre-service teachers design individual project of lesson design?
- (3) How do pre-service teachers respond to Instructional Design Course applying modelling, collaborative learning, and independent learning tasks?

#### 4. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is self-reflective study on Instructional Design course at an English education department, East Java in the 2014/2015 academic year. In this study, I did self-reflection throughout the whole process of my teaching program of “Instructional Design”, a four credit-hour course.

##### 4.1 Participants

The research participants were twenty-four pre-service teachers/ fifth-semester undergraduate students of English education joining a course on “*Instructional Design*”. This four credit-hour course aims at providing learners with skill in designing English lesson plan. Course participants have taken pre-requisite courses, i.e. English Curriculum Design, TEFL Methodology, Language Assessment and Evaluation, and ELT Media.

There were some considerations to select pre-service teachers as the research participants. First, as prospective English teachers, they are required to possess a set of teaching skills, including skill in designing English lesson plan. This must have been acquired during their teacher education program. Second, good planning will result in effective and efficient teaching. Lastly, lesson planning document is needed for monitoring teaching.

##### 4.2 Data Gathering Techniques

There are three kinds of data collected in this research: (1) problems faced by pre-service teachers in designing lesson plan, (2) roles of variations of learning modalities (i.e. modelling, peer collaboration, individual task) in helping pre-service teachers design lesson plan, and (3) pre-service teachers’ response to ID course.

The data collection technique used to elicit problems faced by pre-service teachers in designing lesson plan were document *analysis of lesson plan* and *conference* with pre-service teachers. *Field notes* and *diary* were used to collect data about how variations of learning modalities (i.e. modelling, collaboration, independent task) help pre-service teachers design lesson plan. Written reflection made by pre-service teachers was used to collect data about responses towards ID course.

##### 4.3 Procedures

As self-reflective inquiry, I myself collected data about the problems faced by the pre-service teachers, the roles of variations of learning modalities in lesson plan design, and pre-service teachers’ responses towards ID course.

The procedures in collecting data are schemed in the following:

- 1) analysing draft of lesson plan developed by pre-service teachers and conducting group conferences to identify problems faced by pre-service teachers in designing lesson plan.
- 2) writing field notes and diary as the data sources to explain the roles of variations of learning modalities (i.e. modelling, collaborative writing, independent writing) to scaffold the writing of lesson plan.
- 3) Asking pre-service teachers to write self-reflection to give responses on ID course.

##### 4.4 Data Analysis

Analysis links between what has been found in the data and the research questions. This study applied thematic analysis to analyse the research data. The first step was coding, i.e. reading the data and developing a set of categories, themes or basic organising ideas (Buzan, 1995 in Ryan, 2006). Created codes are based on problems faced by pre-service teachers in creating lesson plan, and how variations of learning modalities (modelling, collaborative writing, independent writing), could help student teachers design lesson plan. The next step was categorising those data by eliminating irrelevant data. Following this step were 1) describing the problems emerged/identified in the process of creating effective lesson plan; 2) explaining how variations of learning modalities (modelling,

collaborative task, independent task) help pre-service teachers create effective lesson plan; 3) describing responses given by pre-service teachers. The last step was drawing conclusion to answer the research questions.

## **5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Problems Faced by Pre-service Teachers in Designing Lesson Plan**

A number of problems were identified when pre-service teachers created the lesson plan. The results of the lesson plan analysis and group conference revealed that course participants mostly had difficulties in breaking down basic competence into indicators and formulating learning objectives.

In writing achievement indicators, operational verbs that are measurable and observable were not used. Two examples of indicators written by pre-service teachers are:

- (1) Understanding the purpose, generic structure, and language features of recount text.
- (2) Understanding moral values of the story.

In addition, in writing learning objectives, the formula ABCD (audience, behaviour, condition, degree) was not fully followed by pre-service teachers. Condition and degree are frequently neglected as formulated in the following

- (3) The students are able to identify the language feature, generic structure of recount text”.

Under what condition and what degree, the indicators will be attained are not written in the formulation of the objectives.

### **5.2 Contributions of Modelling in Understanding Characteristics of Lesson Plan**

From the model of a good lesson plan, course participants got knowledge about the characteristics of genre-based lesson plan. They became familiar with the structure and components of the lesson plan before they were assigned group project and individual project on writing the lesson plan. Genre-based lesson plan was analysed due to the fact that competence-based curriculum for English subject in junior and senior high schools are basically text-based curriculum.

In modelling phase, course participants were assigned to observe attentively the

structure and components of the lesson plan. In particular, how to break down the basic competence (KD) into the indicators, which had to be written using operational (measurable and observable) verbs. Then they had to notice the formulation of learning objectives, containing the aspect of audience, behaviour, condition and degree. These are the crucial aspects in lesson planning as these would guide the materials selection, sequences of learning activities (scenario), and the design of assessment instruments.

In essence, modelling of a good lesson plan could give course participants the whole picture of the lesson plan and the interrelationship among its components. A well-organized lesson plan must be coherent to one another, i.e. learning materials must be in line with the basic competence, indicators and learning objectives; teaching scenarios must be sequenced logically so that learners are guided step-by-step to achieve the learning objectives by doing the learning tasks.

### **5.3 Benefits of Collaboration in Completing Group Project**

Designing lesson plan is categorized as a complex task, therefore collaborative work could potentially help student teachers complete the writing of lesson more easily. In this group project, students are assigned to develop genre-based lesson plan in a group of four. They have to complete the group project in the period of ten meetings (10 x 100 minutes). In each meeting, students have to work based on the agenda where the instructor monitored the progress report via conferences with each group.

In collaborative work, the first thing to do is group formation. To make it effective, course participants are given freedom to choose their own group members by considering heterogeneity of the members. They had to list the names of group members and submit it to me. Then, each group has to select their group leader who is responsible for managing the effectiveness of group work.

Having formed each group with its leader, they have to sit together in their group to discuss agendas they have to go through in completing the project. Therefore, they have to

make operational schedule to be followed for every meeting. Under my guidance, then class were successful to write the project schedule as can be read in Table 1. Based on the schedule, each group is required to complete each agenda in each meeting in the classroom.

Table 1. Group Project Schedule

Week	Agenda	Note
1-2	Group formation and scheduling, determining basic competencies for oral & written cycles, formulating indicators & learning objectives	Sharing, discussion, coaching
3 -4	Selecting and discussing learning materials for oral and written cycles	Sharing, discussion, presentation
5	Selecting and discussing media and learning resources for oral and written cycles	Sharing, discussion, coaching
6-7	Designing learning activities (teaching scenario) and learning tasks for oral and written cycles	Sharing, discussion, coaching
8	Developing process and product assessment for oral and written cycles	Sharing, discussion, coaching
9 -10	Discussing draft of lesson plan draft and revision	Sharing, discussion, presentation
11	Submitting the final version of the lesson plan	Group leader

Having made schedule, each group had to distribute tasks to group members to be completed. Since each group consists of four members, two members are assigned to develop lesson plan for oral cycle, whereas two others develop lesson plan for written cycle. Based on the job distribution, each group member is required to work on it and reported its progress every week based on the schedule. For example, they have to determine basic competencies, writing indicators and learning objectives by consulting the curriculum document.

Based on my observation, students were engaged and enthusiastic in completing their tasks. They helped one another in finding learning materials and planned instructional media, designed teaching scenario, and prepared assessment instruments. Through collaboration,

with enough coaching from instructor, each group could get concrete experiences in completing group project successfully. Shortly, through collaboration students could acquire social skills (communication skill, responsibility, trust, respect, care, and tolerance) and academic skills (ability to create effective lesson plan). These benefits are due to applying cooperative learning principles: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual responsibility, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing (Johnson, et.al., 1990).

#### 5.4 Benefits of Independent Task in Completing Individual Project

Providing independent learning activity after group collaboration aims to give course participants reinforcement to try out of what have been learned and acquired in group collaboration. In individual project of lesson plan design, each student is assigned to produce lesson plan on writing skill using genre-based approach. In this project, each course participant selected the basic competence, developed indicators and learning objectives from school-based curriculum document for junior or senior high school. They had to complete the task in a period of 5 meetings (5 x 100 minutes).

Through individual task, course participants became more self-directed learners characterized by learner's ability to take charge of his/her own learning (Holec, 1981 in Qi, 2012). From observations, it was revealed that student teachers engaged in choosing learning materials, designing the learning tasks, crafting teaching scenario, selecting appropriate media, and developing process and product assessment instruments. They enjoyed working alone and became more confident in accomplishing individual tasks because they could transfer the habits/skills of working in collaboration into the individual skills.

From the analysis of the lesson plan developed, it was found that course participants: 1) could minimise the occurrence of the same mistakes or eliminate the same mistakes in the writing of indicators and learning objectives, 2) could design teaching scenarios using genre-based approach appropriately.

### 5.5 Response towards Instructional Design Course

At the end of ID course, course participants were asked to evaluate ID course by writing critical reflection based on what they experienced and felt in joining the course. Course participants did not have to write their names to invite objective evaluation. The following responses are taken from reflective notes written by course participants.

- (1) Joining Instructional design course is really beneficial for me. It gives me insight about how to plan a lesson through lesson planning. At the first time, or maybe before I joined this course I knew nothing about how to create a lesson planning, how to develop basic competence(s) into indicator(s), etc.
- (2) In my opinion, after taking ID class, making a lesson plan is not difficult as I thought before. The explanation and the example that have already been given in the class are very helpful for me. Special time to consult my lesson plan is also very helpful for me.

These two responses from course participants indicate that varying learning modalities in ID course could facilitate them design English lesson plan. Both of them acknowledged that they got benefits in the forms of insights, knowledge, and skills after having joined ID course.

### 6. CONCLUSIONS

Developing lesson plan is complex process so that teachers need to provide assistance to help pre-service teachers design effective lesson plan. Varying learning modalities in the forms of modelling, collaborative writing, and independent writing of lesson plan could help pre-service teachers in the process of writing effective lesson plan. Through modelling, pre-service teachers could recognize deeply about the features of lesson plan structure. Via collaboration, pre-service teachers could acquire both social skills, i.e. communication skill, responsibility, trust, respect, care, and tolerance and academic skills, i.e. the ability to create effective lesson plan. In independent writing task, pre-service teachers became more self-directed learners and gained confidence in

accomplishing the task. The result of critical reflection revealed that pre-service teachers responded positively towards variations of learning modalities provided in ID course.

The findings of this study have the following implications: 1) in teaching a complex task, such as the lesson design, teachers are required to vary learning modalities for the purpose of facilitating learners having different learning styles to acquire the target competencies. Learning independency could only be acquired if learners are given skills and adequate practices through classroom instructions conducive for formation of independent learning.

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