**SLS 614: Second Language Writing**

ESL Lesson Plan: Getting What You Want

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**English as a second language: L2 Writing lesson plan**

The following paper will describe one week of ESL Integrated Lesson Planning. The rationales for the lesson plan will be based on the class readings. Finally, I will conclude the paper with my own views and comments on my experience teaching ESL and L2 writing in particular. The various materials used for the lesson plan are attached in the Appendix section at the end.

**1. Lesson Plan Context**

**1.1 Institution**

EF stands for Education First. It was founded in 1965 in Sweden. In its 50 years of existence, the number of schools and offices has grown to 500 based in 107 countries with a total of 40500 employees ([www.ef.edu/about-us/our-company](http://www.ef.edu/about-us/our-company)). EF has 14 English Language Schools throughout the United States and Canada. Some of the locations include Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Diego, Seattle, Vancouver and Toronto among other locations. However, the center of this lesson plan is the EF Honolulu Language School, located at the Waikiki Trade Center, on 2255 Kuhio Avenue in Honolulu, Hawai’i.

**1. 2 Class Level: B2-2 Unit 1: Getting what you want**

Classes at EF Honolulu fall into 3 main categories: Intensive, General and Basic. The 3 main class types are organized around a number of General English Lessons that includes the teaching of the 4 skills (Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing) through the use of a textbook (published by EF); General English I-Lab computer lessons and an IPad class. This lesson plan falls under the category of General English courses. The description of the G.E. classes is below.

General Course

10 x 80-min General English Course that includes:

7 x 80-min General English Lessons per week

2 x 80-min General English I Lab per week

1 x 80-min General Class using IPads

2 x 80-min Special Interest Lessons (1 choice)

1 x 80-min Lecture Lesson in Lecture Hall

The following lesson plan is one week (10 x 80-min) of integrated ESL language teaching. It includes the 4 skills. But the L2 writing is highlighted, as it is the focus of this paper. The lesson plan is based on the EF textbook. The grounds for the use of the textbook as basis for the lesson plan will be detailed in the rationale section.

**1.3 Students**

This lesson plan is designed for ESL students in general but for EF students in particular. The age of the students varies (as we will show in the participants’ data) from 18/19 years old to the mid and high 20’s. However, there are students in the “older” category, up to the early 40’s. And as always, there are exceptions such as students being in their 60’s or even early 80’s (one student even celebrated her 80th birthday at EF Honolulu). The EF students are also categorized by length of stay:

**AY:** These are students who come on a nine-month program starting in January, April or September. (AY: Academic Year or All Year students)

**SEM:** These are students who come on a six-month program, starting in January, April or September. (SEM: Semester Students)

**ILS:** These are the traditional EFL students who come on “continuous enrolment” courses of shorter length that last anything from 2 to 20 weeks. (ILS: International Language School)

Finally, there is the level of the students, which is distinguished based on the CEFR ranking. A placement test online is used to determine the level of the students. EF Honolulu follows the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference). The CEFR is described as

“*Providing a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency that allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis*.”

(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

The levels of students vary from A (lowest level) to C (Highest Level). The students for this lesson plan are B2-2 Level. According to the CEFR self assessment grid, the B2 level is described as:

“*I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events or experiences*”.

(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

It leads to the next step in lesson planning: the goals and objectives.

**1.4 Goals and Objectives**

According to the textbook, the objectives of the students for this unit include:

* Students will be able to writing an e-mail & job application
* Students will be able to use I wish/If only appropriately
* Students will be able to use “words and phrasal verbs related to getting what one wants”

And finally,

* Students will be able to write a questionnaire to help clients decide which job might be most suitable to them.

Ferris & Hedgcock (2014) define objectives as “consisting of a narrower range of desired outcomes or ‘statements about how…goals will be achieved” (p. 158). In this lesson plan, due to the context of the school as an open enrolment process, its objectives are necessarily based on a short-term (weekly) schedule. My lesson plan includes those objectives spread out over just one week as the following week new objectives within a new unit with new arriving students need to be met. I agree with Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) when they state that: “objectives should not ‘consist of a listing of textbook exercises’” (p. 158) but the context at EF is a particular one that requires such type of short-term objectives based on the EF textbook. As my lesson makes clear however, I also include beyond the textbook materials and activities such as videos (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) that relate to the overall theme (Getting What I want), Power Point (Tuesday) and games (Pyramid on Friday). These activities are meant, as Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) explain, to “exercise flexibility in planning courses and leading lessons; …experiment with new strategies and skills, and diverge from well-laid plans” (p. 159).

**2. Rationales**

**2.1 Limitations**

Despite the lesson plan covering one week of lessons, the reflection here focuses on the teaching of the writing skill aspect of the lessons. But one note I believe is important to share is that this lesson plan is an integrative one, in other words, it includes all 4 skills. Each skill builds on the others even if they are taught separately and on different days. One big limitation and advantage is the use of the textbook as basis for the various lessons and their links to each other.

**2.2 Textbook Use**

Ferris and Hedgcock (2014), citing Brown (1995), write that: ”There is no such thing as a perfect textbook” (p. 123). EF Textbook certainly falls into that category. But it is an efficient tool that I use to base my lessons on. One reason is “the sense of security” (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2014, p. 122) that it provides both for the students and me, as the teacher. In addition, it provides me with a basis to work from and guide me. The EF textbook is also used to “provide continuity and coherence among the levels of instruction” (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2014, p. 123) as each level at EF has its own textbook. But as my lesson plan demonstrates, I also diverge from the textbook to add my own materials. I add the materials “to accommodate evolving student learning needs and interests” (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2014, p. 123) but also to simply make the class more interesting and engaging. Here the videos each tell a story of an aspect of motivation which is in line with the theme of “Getting what you want”. I also added some materials on the grammar and reading points from the Unit: I wish/If only document from [www.tolearnenglish.com](http://www.tolearnenglish.com) website; Longman Essential Idioms by Robert Dixson; the article Are you born to be motivated by Jen Weigel; and the Indirect Questions exercise supplement from the Ventures 4 series. As the pictures show (See Power Point with Textbook images), the textbook exercises are pretty dry, and limited in scope and number. I decided, “to supplement and adapt” (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2014, p. 123) the textbook to make it more effective, or at least more interesting.

**2.3 Activities**

The activities within the lesson plan are varied but center around the grammar points as well as its translation into a written opinion about either a job application or on a short movie on the theme of motivation. Each of the written activities (besides the textbook exercises) takes place in the I-lab where each student has access to a computer. The program used is Edmodo, which allows them to share their written document online with their classmates. The lesson is sequence in one grammar point put explicitly explained with textbook exercises (and supplemented materials) and then implemented in the I-Lab in an individual form. This lesson attempts to reflect “the mapping sequence of instructional activities to scaffold student learning over the span of a course” (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2014, p. 164). The movies and the newspaper article follow another reasoning expressed by Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) when they cited Smagorintsky:

“*If you think that students are at a particular level, don’t teach to that level. Rather, lead them to a higher level of development – think of it as a sort of cognitive carrot and stick. Instead of designing a static curriculum targeted at students’ presumed levels, teachers who follow this principle are attentive to where students are and where instruction might take them*” (p. 164/165)

The “need for repetition” (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2014, p. 167) is underlined in the lesson on Wednesday and Friday during the I-Lab sessions. Each session starts with a review of the grammar point explained in the previous lesson. As Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) explained, the “matrix model entails planning multiple and diverse encounters with the same skill, strategy, or genre” (p. 167). The I-Lab classes allows for the students to work together on their exercises or alone. But as the teacher, I walk around, check the work in progress, answer questions and finally have students share their answers/writing with the class.

**3. Conclusion**

This lesson plan does not include any face-to-face conferencing on their drafts, or any homework. The institutional context can often dictate the type or structure of a lesson, its focus and its delivery. This lesson plan is specific to EF as it uses their textbook, their lesson structure (one unit one week), its focus (4 skills) and its assessment methodology (a quiz at the end of each unit, see attached). This lesson is a mixed of textbook guidelines and supplemental materials to create an interesting and engaging learning environment. The writing skills are only based on specific grammar points but no true big task or essay structure. The level of B2-2 is a low intermediate level but with students being able to be pushed toward a higher objective. The objectives are meant on a daily basis within this lesson. Because this class is not about EAP or even ESP but only about English language learning, it makes the lesson a little less focused on one goal but more focused on the English language experience/immersion. This rationale is as much a description as a reflection on a lesson plan that I wrote and implemented at EF. EF presents an English language immersion experience (each lesson is 2x80 minutes) while trying to entertain and keep the students engaged. It has its advantages and drawbacks. But ultimately, I feel that this lesson plan describes the scaffolding necessary for each student to reach the objectives stated, while pushing him or her a little further.

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