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TEACHER EDUCATORS’ CONCEPTIONS ABOUT LESSON PLANNING

IN A BA PROGRAM

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LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA CASTELLANA, INGLÉS Y FRANCÉS
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Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito para optar al título de Licenciado (s) en
Lengua Castellana, Inglés y Francés

Director
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Abstract

This research project talks about teacher educators’ conceptions about lesson planning and the manner in which they are displayed in English language Teacher Education (ELTE) classes. The five teacher educators participating belong to the BA program in English, Spanish, and French, Education Sciences Faculty, at La Salle University. We collected data through interviews and observations, and analyzed it by using Grounded Theory principles. The identification and description of the set of lesson planning conceptions from the analysis allow the understanding of the manner in which the participant teacher-educators apply them in order to configure the execution of their classes. Findings unveil that teacher educators do not necessarily conceive lesson planning as theory may state. Participant teacher educators base their lesson planning on aspects such as students’ contexts and backgrounds, class objectives and topics, and a content-based or language-based orientation. These conceptions do not exactly match their teaching practices in the classroom since the same dynamics, environment, and participants may reorient the lesson plan. This research project understands the different teacher educators’ conceptions about lesson planning and the manner in which classroom factors partake in its implementation.

Key words: Lesson planning, conceptions, ELTE classroom, teacher educators.

Resumen

Este proyecto de investigación habla acerca de las concepciones de los profesores acerca del planeamiento de clases y la manera en que estas son desarrolladas en las clases de inglés. Los profesores participantes de la investigación, pertenecen a la licenciatura en lengua Castellana, Inglés y Francés de la facultad de ciencias de la educación de la Universidad de la Salle. Esta investigación fue dirigida bajo los principios de la teoría fundamentada, la cual permite la creación de categorías sobre las concepciones pedagógicas de los profesores sobre la planeación de clase. La identificación y descripción de estas concepciones nos permiten entender la manera en la cual los profesores aplican estas, con el fin de configurar la ejecución de sus clases. Los resultados revelan que los educadores no necesariamente conciben la planeación de clase estrictamente como se propone en la teoría. Los profesores participantes en esta investigación basan su planeación de clase en aspectos como: contexto, conocimientos previos de los estudiantes, objetivos y temas de la clase, así como el tipo de clases, teórica o práctica. Estas concepciones no están conectadas exactamente con sus prácticas de enseñanza en la clase ya que la misma dinámica, pueden reorientar la planeación. Este proyecto entiende las diferentes concepciones de los profesores sobre planeación de clase y cómo estas podrían ser cambiadas o ajustadas, dependiendo de varios factores de la clase.

Palabras clave: Planeación de clase, concepciones, planeación de clases de inglés como segunda lengua

Résumé (French version)

Ce projet de recherche a pour thème les conceptions des professeurs concernant la planification de classes et la manière dont elles sont développées dans les classes d’anglais. Les professeurs participants à la recherche font partie de la licence en espagnol, anglais et français de la faculté des sciences de l’éducation de l’Université de la Salle. Cette recherche a été dirigée par les principes de la théorie fondée, laquelle permet la création de catégories sur les conceptions pédagogiques des professeurs sur la planification de classe. L’identification et la description de ces conceptions nous permettent de comprendre la manière par laquelle les
professeurs l’applique, avec pour but de configurer la mise en place de leurs classes. Les résultats révèlent que les éducateurs ne conçoivent pas nécessairement la planification de leur classe strictement comme ils le proposent en théorie. Les professeurs participants à cette recherche basent leur planification de classe sur des aspects comme : le contexte, les connaissances précédentes des étudiants, les objectifs et thèmes de la classe, mais aussi le type de classe, théorique ou pratique. Ces conceptions ne sont pas connectées exactement avec leurs pratiques d’enseignement dans la classe, puisque la même dynamique, le milieu, et les participants, ils peuvent réorienter la planification. Ce projet comprend les différentes conceptions des professeurs sur la planification de classe et comment celles-ci pourraient être changées ou ajustées selon plusieurs facteurs de la classe.

**Mots clés:** Planification de classe, conceptions, planification de classes d'anglais comme seconde langue.
Teacher Educators’ Conceptions about Lesson Planning in a BA Program

Introduction

The research interest that gave origin to the project presented in this article emerged when we became more aware of the role of a “lesson orchestrator” that our teacher educators portrayed during the classes of our BA undergraduate program in Spanish, English, and French, Education Sciences Faculty, La Salle University. Richards and Rodgers (2014) conceive teacher roles as an orchestrator as the one who plans, manages, and orients lessons in the classroom. One remarkable activity belonging to this role in our teacher educators is planning their lessons for the English language classes that are part of the first half of the BA program curriculum. With our research interest blooming for the realization of a research study, part of our teacher education, we found lesson planning of our teacher-educators useful for a study. After initial readings about this topic, we realized that lesson planning is fundamental for English language teacher-educators because they need a “map” to follow when giving out their classes.

We considered meaningful to our research, finding some researchable landmarks about this topic, according to that, we found two different previous studies, which are briefly explained below

“Sharing views of CLIL lesson planning in language teacher education” is a research article to the pre service teachers’ perceptions about content and language integrated learning in relation with lesson planning. This research develops how those teachers should include CLIL in their lesson and which is the most accurate way to do it. We find this project, useful to our research because the conclusions could give us some statements about pedagogical teacher’s conceptions about lesson planning.

Lesson plan proposal based on cooperative learning to improve interaction in
primary sections at Eduardo Carranza School which is related to the creation of template of a lesson planning which contains certain characteristics which are quite similar with the ones we obtained from our primary authors. Such categories are related to teacher-educators and students’ objectives and student’s contexts and backgrounds. Even though this research project does not consider the conceptions that teacher-educators have about lesson planning, comprehends an understanding of it that includes the teacher-educator’s and institutional aims which affect the way in which a lesson plan is created.

With respect to this research interest, we initially made five preliminary observations in order to narrow it. We found that some of the observed teacher-educators seemed to plan their classes in different ways, while the others did not seem to reveal a fixed process of lesson planning. In addition, we found that the initially observed teacher-educators likely organized their classes in different ways and in relation to varied factors, such as topics, students’ reactions, attitudes, emergent situations of doubts, and further explanations. The broad-scale insights that we got from these preliminary, non-structured, observations led us to grasp a general idea of what lesson planning could really mean for the English language teacher-educators in our BA undergraduate program.

Lesson planning is a process belonging to the teaching-learning strategies and the development inside the classroom (Giuseppe, 2000). This process may vary depending on teachers’ context accounts such as students’ needs, participation, and attention; plus, the subject and the topics to be covered. Teachers’ classroom practices should reflect these aspects. From this conception, lesson planning looks like a fixed method. Nonetheless, in our preliminary observations, we found that the way in which the teacher-educators had planned their classes did not much resemble the just-mentioned conception. The teacher-educators appeared to have created and developed their own way of planning the lessons probably in line with other several issues, such as the syllabus, the students’ general performance during
class activities, the topics and pedagogical purposes of the lessons, plus, perhaps, their own conceptions about what a language class should be, and the activities to do in them.

Throughout our major, in classes of Didactics and Pedagogy, we learned that lesson planning is a process that demands daily organization by taking into account students’ language needs and teachers’ set of strategies. Analyzing our preliminary observations and these learnings, we wonder why several teacher-educators seem to have varied conceptions about what a lesson plan should be and how to develop it in their classes.

In ELTE, the understanding about lesson planning is fundamental since it allows analyzing how and why to plan a lesson and the impact that it may have on students’ performance in class. Lesson planning constitutes all the teacher’s ideas in order to understand their concise and clear conceptions about the preparation of their classes. Knowing in a more precise and fundamental manner how our teacher-educators conceive lesson planning then became the endeavor to study for our research project.

By taking into account the above-mentioned aspects, we sought to give an answer to the following research question: what are the pedagogical conceptions that the English language teacher-educators of our BA undergraduate program have about lesson planning? From our research question, we stated the following objectives:

- Identify the set of teachers' educator's pedagogical conceptions about lesson planning.
- Describe how teacher applies those conceptions in lesson planning and in the execution of the classes.
- Understand the manner in which conceptions of lesson plan configure the execution of the classes.

Teacher-educators can display those pedagogical conceptions about lesson planning in class or in talks about it. That is why, we also pursued to identify how teacher-educators construct and apply those conceptions in for execution of their classes.
Comprehending the way and steps through which English language teacher-educators in our BA undergraduate program plan and give their classes helps future colleagues and teacher-educators around embrace more real facts about how this really occurs in our program. We want to find why, from the lesson-planning angle, the English language classes in the first half of the program curriculum occur from lesson planning. Our research study is then justified from the knowledge that can emerge in the way in which English language teacher-educators plan their lessons and how its development influences in their classes. Our research study as well raises awareness of the importance to prepare a class and its influences in teaching perspectives, mostly when we as future in-service English language teachers need to know that sometimes classes do not go as planned.

Conceptual Framework

Analyzing the research question, we need first to understand and identify the two main concepts of it. In this section, we introduce the conceptual foundations of our research study, conceptions and lesson planning.

Teachers’ conceptions. By taking into consideration teachers’ and students’ context and the objectives for teaching and learning a second language (English in this case), the word ‘conceptions’ could have different interpretations. Teachers’ conceptions are sometimes seen apart from institutional aims. This does not mean that those conceptions are wrong or invalid. Teachers’ conceptions could be understood in terms of agreement or disagreement with teaching practices, situations, and contexts. (Brown, 2004).

For this research study, we understand that conceptions represent different categories of ideas held by teacher-educators behind their descriptions of how educational things are experienced (Brown, 2004). Conceptions act as a framework through which a teacher-educator views, interprets and interacts with the teaching environment. Conceptions then describe the organizing framework by which a teacher-educator understands, responds to, and
interacts with a phenomenon (Brown, 2004). As Brown adverts, the structure of teachers' conceptions is not uniform and simple; they appear to have multiple facets and connections because of course syllabus, class students, and experiential knowledge.

We thus understand that an institution establishes a specific syllabus for each level, over which teacher-educators may have their own conceptions, and that they can display these conceptions during each class through the implementation of varied teaching strategies. According to Brown (2004), those teaching strategies also matches teacher-educators' conceptions about students' self-confidence, morale, creativity, and work. These two factors, syllabus and students’ variables, are central to conceptions of how to give the classes, meaning teacher-educators’ pedagogical conceptions. According to Forgas (1995), pedagogical conceptions are not defined in a hierarchical structure, central and peripheral conceptions, or mood-influenced or unaffected, but in terms of the understanding of teaching phenomena. Therefore, for this research study, pedagogical conceptions are understood as all the different ideas that teacher educators have about the development, factors, and situations of a teaching phenomenon, being this the lesson planning for this study. Thus, teacher-educators bring in their minds lesson planning structures before the class, the development of it can affect their mood and the planning can change completely.

**Lesson planning.** For teacher-educators, a plan gives the lesson a framework, an overall shape. It is true that teacher-educators may end up departing from it at stages of the lesson, but at the very least, it would be something to fall back on (Harmer, 1998). Lesson planning can have realizations as syllabus, didactic units, road maps or agendas. These different types of realizations of a lesson plan are used for different purposes of the class. It means, sometimes, teacher-educators have to prepare a complete didactic unit for a long period of classes. In other cases, they could use just an agenda. Lesson planning depends on the type of classes, students, topics, contexts, and institutional aims (Harmer, 1998).
When teacher-educators create a lesson plan, they need to consider factors that could affect the class development, such as language level, context of the students, their educational and cultural background, etc. (Maxom, 2009). They have to plan their classes minutely so everything that they develop in class is prearranged. As stated by Guissepe (2000), lesson planning is generally considered as a process in the teaching learning strategies and the development inside the classroom. This process may vary depending on teacher-educators’ preferences for teaching the content, the subject that is going to be covered, and students’ language needs. Lesson planning also depends on the target language of the class (in this case English). There are as many ways to structure a lesson plan as there are different teaching situations, and not a single plan can serve as a model for all situations (Snow, 2006); however, for general planning in the English language class (Harmer, 1998; Guissepe, 2000; Brown, 2004, Snow, 2006), a basic initial formula would consist of the following parts:

1. **Preview:** Giving students an overview of the day’s lesson conveys a sense that there is a definite purpose and plan behind the day’s activities.

2. **Warm-up:** A lesson often starts with a brief activity that is relatively lively. Its main function is to generate a good class atmosphere, but it can also be used for reviewing material from previous lessons or introducing new material in the day’s lesson.

3. **Main activities:** These are the main course of the day’s menu, the more demanding activities to which most of the lesson will be devoted.

4. **Optional activity:** This is an activity that you hope to use but are ready to omit if you are running out of time.

5. **Reserve (or spare-tire) activity:** This is an activity that is not a key part of your lesson plan, but you have it available in case the other parts of the lesson go more quickly than planned, leaving you with unexpected time at the end of the class.

Harmer (1998) affirms that the first thing such a plan needs to detail is who the students are:
Lesson planning for English language teaching will always need a presentation, practice and production in the lesson. Therefore, teacher-educators need to clarify the concepts, skills and their implantation (Maxom, 2009). Furthermore, language proficiency levels are important for lesson planning too and each has specific considerations for teaching. They could be beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced (Maxom, 2009). Each gives a notion about teaching English taking into account how teacher-educators have to prepare a lesson with real facts, social context, culture, language proficiency levels, and improving of students’ communication and knowledge about all these matters. In the same line of thought, Harmer (1998) indicates that, for these purposes, lesson planning has to be developed in a sequence: the following of indispensable steps that teacher-educators have to take into account, such as the level of the students, their needs, the skills to develop, the purpose, and the topic of the class. Teacher-educators should wonder about these matters in order to prepare classes.

When English language teacher-educators are going to develop their classes, they also need sources that help them have a successful class. This is why they need a guide, or a lesson plan. In lesson planning, teacher-educators have to focus on many aspects (such as the ones mentioned before). There is not a perfect lesson plan, the relevance here is to develop which is useful for students’ and class needs.

Research Methodology

This research study on English language teacher-educators’ pedagogical conceptions about lesson planning follows the principles of a descriptive type of research. In consonance with Brown and Rodgers (2002), descriptive research in second language education is a study that examines the development of some aspects of language teaching, learning, or behavior in
context. For these studies, the aspect is documented and descriptive analyses are used to reveal existing trends. Our study examines the teacher-educators’ conceptions about lesson planning and how they are visible in their classes.

In order to analyze this, we use Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These authors emphasize that an analysis under this methodology results into the creation of new theory based on experiences of research participants. However, we would like to warn our readers that the research study presented in this article does not state a new theory about lesson planning in English language teacher education with the complexities that Strauss and Corbin (1990) demand, say, theoretical insights of the phenomenon, data naming, conceptual categories, causal conditions, and standards of validation. What this research study does do in terms of a new theory, following Allan (2003), Dick (2005), and the same Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) advice, is *conceptualizing a phenomenon at a micro scale in a situated context*. The phenomenon is the English language teacher-educators’ conceptions about lesson planning in the first half of the curriculum (the micro scale) of the BA undergraduate program in Spanish, English, and French (the situated context) of the Education Sciences Faculty, at La Salle University. Therefore, the expected “new theory” resides only on this conceptualization about these teacher-educators’ conceptions about lesson planning in the indicated part of this specific program, and not beyond these boundaries.

The methodological design for this current study under the principles of descriptive research and grounded theory data analysis covers two main stages. One is the question formulating and theory sampling (the understanding of the main constructs underpinning the study). Second is data chunking, naming, and the establishment of the phenomenon conceptualization (at a micro level in a situated context) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998; Brown & Rodgers, 2002).

Grounded theory for our study was, then, designed with the aim to develop a well-
integrated set of concepts that provided a conceptual explanation of the phenomenon under study. The design presented below should explain, describe and give a degree of predictability of the phenomenon in the situated context. The data for a grounded theory can come from various sources. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) indicate that data collection procedures in Grounded Theory may involve interviews and observations, as well as, but not all, other sources as government documents, video tapes, newspapers, letters, and books - anything that may shed light on questions under study. In this study on lesson planning conceptions, interviews and observations provide the data for the conceptualizations.

Following Strauss & Corbin (1990, 1998) and Brown & Rodgers (2002), our research methodology follows the next steps, as displayed in table 1.

Table 1.
General elements in our descriptive-grounded theory research design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) and Brown and Rodgers (2002)</th>
<th>Steps done in this current study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Question formulating</td>
<td>what are the pedagogical conceptions that the English language teacher-educators of our BA undergraduate program have about lesson planning and how are they displayed in class (see Introduction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Theoretical sampling</td>
<td>Understanding of the constructs of conceptions and lesson planning (see Conceptual Framework)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. Interview transcribing and Contact summary | Data collection:  
  - a questionnaire for knowing teacher-educators’ preliminary conceptions on lesson planning  
  - Interview one about teacher-educators’ conceptions on lesson planning before the class  
  - Observation of the teacher-educators’ class  
  - Interview two about teacher-educators’ conceptions on lesson planning after the data analysis of the questionnaire, interview 1, and observations. |
| 4. Data chunking and Data naming – Coding | Data analysis |
| 5. Developing conceptual categories |  |
| 6. Constant comparison |  |
| 7. Analytic memoing* | Not necessarily included at a micro level |
Two concepts (conceptions and lesson planning) constitutes the theoretical sampling. We used three data collection instruments/techniques, a questionnaire, interviews and observations. Data analysis follow three types of coding, open, axial, and selective. These encodings allow us to go from the general to the specific and find the experiences that fits more to the phenomenon under study. Finally, the constant comparison develops the conceptual categories (see also Hernandez, Fernandez, Baptista, 2010).

In this research, we decided to find teacher educators who gave classes in the English emphasis because we wanted to analyze all type of English courses. Those teachers were in charge of language- and context-based subjects, they taught different subjects in different semesters as well. This allowed us to have ampler ideas about lesson planning in the program. Classes observed from different semesters, which are 6th, 7th and 8th semester. The students who were part of these courses were in the process of learning the language itself, and using the language with pedagogical purposes.

**Instruments for data collection.** We used three instruments to collect information about the participant teacher-educators’ conceptions about lesson planning in the BA undergraduate program: a questionnaire, interview, and observations.

**A questionnaire.** Wilson and McLean (1994) state that researchers can design and use questionnaires to collect vast quantities of data from a variety of respondents. We decided to use an online questionnaire to collect preliminary conceptions about lesson planning that the participant teacher-educators may have before the first interview and the observations. We asked open-ended questions about how they conceive lesson planning for the indicated classes, preparation of the class, the way to do it, time, and teaching aspects. This instrument was applied once with all the participant teacher-educators before interviewing them and
observing their classes.

**The interviews.** We used semi structured interviews to identify the sets of teacher-educators’ conceptions about lesson planning. According to Kvale (2006), an interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situation of research data. As a second point of view, the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) advert that the order of the interview may be controlled while still giving space for spontaneity; the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but also for responses about complex and deep issues.

**The first interview.** We decided to make a first interview with the participant teacher-educators before the classes because it will give us initial information about their pedagogical conceptions. We made two interviews per semester. The questions of this interview address to their conceptions about lesson planning knowledge, class preparation organization, and lesson plan administration.

**The second interview.** We decided to make a second interview after we have analyzed the observed class and the teacher-educator’s answers in the questionnaire. By presenting the teacher educator the corresponding insights drawn from all this, this second interview aims to make them reflect on their personal conceptions about what each has done throughout the class and in correspondence to the lesson planning presented in the first interview. The questions point out to the relation between what was planned and what was done from that plan; the way done it, time and pacing, teaching aspects, activities, language skills and materials.

**The observations.** The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers researchers the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social
situations. In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in situ rather than relying on second-hand accounts (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Observations let us know if the participant teacher-educators develop different meanings of pedagogical conceptions about lesson planning. We observed the teacher-educators when they were doing each class and documented the aspects about lesson planning in an observation log.

**Recording the observations.** We recorded each lesson in a direct and non-participant way. We recorded from the back of the classroom, at the whole class but with an aim to the teacher-educator. We also recorded both of the interview with each participant teacher-educator.

**Data Analysis.** We apply Grounded theory data analysis procedures in each of the data collected with the indicated instruments. With the following steps, we could make an analysis of every category founded within each instrument. We could classify those conceptions of lesson planning in categories and make a comparison of them to find the more specific and general conceptions of each teacher-educator talking about lesson planning. Grounded theory highlights our objectives, due to each category in this research project, leads to define our research purposes, as it is explained below:

**Open coding.** We find as many categories from data collected to be analyzed and categorized. We did this step in base from the data that we obtained and all the theory knowledge that we have about our research concepts. Open coding, develops our first research objective, which is connected with the identification of the several conceptions which teachers have in lesson planning

**Axial coding.** We selected the main categories of the open coding. Here we can start to find the patterns that we can observe in the categories created before. This coding points out our second research objective which is the description of those conceptions and their relation with the classes execution. These patterns account for the different pedagogical
Selective coding. We have to link all the categories and find the ones related to the conceptualization of the phenomenon (lesson planning conceptions). In this stage, we got results from the conceptual framework and data collected and analyzed. This category concludes our third objective which is related to the understanding of the configuration class process. The obtained findings, allow us to comprehend the meaningful application of those conceptions in classes.

The intention with this coding process is to deconstruct the data into manageable chunks in order to facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon in question (Calman, 2006). Based on the data from theory, the questionnaire, observations, recordings, and interviews, teacher-educators’ lesson plan conceptions emerged. Grounded theory as analysis of data is very useful for this research because we can make an analysis of every category founded with instruments, it means, we can classify those conceptions of lesson planning into categories and make a comparison of them, all in order to find the more specific and general conception about lesson planning in the situated context.

Results

Throughout the research process, we have been getting data from a certain number of observations, interviews and questionnaires related to the research interest. The participant teacher-educators’ answers and class performance unveiled the following conceptions about lesson planning:

Subjectivity of lesson planning. It refers to the way in which the participant teacher-educators plan their classes, depending on their own lesson planning conceptualizations, and upon related theory. The participant teacher-educators’ conceptions about lesson planning are subjective because they say that they prepare the class taking into account their own experience and knowledge rather than theory. It happens before, during and after the classes.
For example, they included issues such as warming up, opening, practice, development activity and production at the end of the class, as theory says, but not necessarily in the same order. In the interviews, the participant teacher-educators reported that they plan their classes with the above-mentioned steps plus accounting for the student’s level, attitudes and contents of the class.

We asked the participant teacher-educators how they had prepared the classes, so they answered that in line with the above mentioned steps, as well as the students’ English proficiency level and attitude the contents of the class. One of the participant teacher-educators said that he did not use a lesson plan but an agenda. We realized that this was with the agenda following some steps in order to develop the class as he had planned it.

We could see that the participant teacher-educators also have a purpose or aim on their classes, it means that they need a forecast to develop their classes. We could say that in that aspect they are very near to the theory taking into account one of the elements of lesson planning. Teacher-educators arrive to the class with the idea about what they want the students to do, but that does not necessarily happen as planned. For instance, one participant teacher-educator says that he wants his students to develop an autonomous learning. However, as we analyzed during his class, his expectations of autonomy differ from the students’ one. We could see that autonomous work for the participant teacher-educator refers to the students taking the risk to say something new and produce knowledge; nonetheless, for students, autonomy seems to mean work by themselves and give opinions taking into account the topic of the class. We confirmed this in one of the participant teacher-educator’s answers to the questions of which factors to take into account in order to manage time in the lesson plan. The participant teacher-educator answered with aspects such as the context, the complexity of the class and the activities. This answer could tell us that this participant teacher-educators conception in lesson planning rests on class situations, aspects and
students.

The conception that we highlight from these insights is that there is subjectivity of lesson planning present in the participant teacher-educators’ actions for preparing a lesson. Those conceptions are close to theory because it mentions the steps to plan lessons, an account of student’s level and attitudes as well as the contents of the class. However, it is subjective because the participant teacher-educators organize what theory says in a different way, even they give different names to concepts, such as warming up or wrap up. Teacher-educators in our BA program know that there are some stages to follow but it does not mean that they follow them as theory says, however some of them create an agenda as planning strategy. In the following figure, we explain this finding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Evidences</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjectivity of lesson planning is the way in which the participant teachers plan their classes, depending on their own lesson planning conceptions, and upon related theory.</td>
<td>Autonomy: The meaning of autonomy for teacher is different from the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agenda: Did not use a lesson planning, he just used an agenda. We realized that this was with the agenda following some steps in order to develop the class as he had planned it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is subjectivity of lesson planning present in the participant teacher-educators’ actions for preparing a lesson. Those conceptions are close to theory because it mentions the steps to plan lessons, an account of student’s level and attitudes as well as the contents of the class.

Table 1. Subjectivity in lesson planning.

**Objective-based preparation in lesson planning.** In the moment of preparing classes, the participant teacher-educators consider a series of aspects in terms of objectives, the students’ major, needs and preferences. Besides, the participant teacher-educators have their own objectives for their teaching practices. In this conceptualization, we know that the participant teacher-educators arrive to the class with a specific objective of what they have planned for the class. Nevertheless, those objectives could be created or established for the participant teacher-educators´ teaching practices but not necessarily for the students´ learning
achievements. We mentioned this because, for example, the participant teacher-educators said that the class was for the students’ needs because the students are preparing themselves for being teachers. Although, the participant teacher-educators consider students’ needs to be relevant in their development, at no point of the class he did something related to the process of becoming a language teacher. Another instance is the participant teacher-educators’ idea that one of the goals of the class was trying to make the class activities ‘fun’ for the students. It means that, for the participant teacher-educators ‘fun’ activities are dynamic and didactic, but for the students are about games and entertainment. During the observation process, we saw this situation in the classes of the participant teacher-educators. Although the teacher-educators had activities under their conception of “fun” or dynamic, we saw students getting distracted and making different things such as chatting or just talking to their classmates about unrelated topics of the class. It gave us an idea about the mismatch between teacher-educators’ idea of what “fun” is and what students think about it.

Eventually, one of the participant teacher-educators said that usually what he planned did not match with his students’ preferences. For example, in the corresponding observed class, the students had to see a theoretical topic, but they wanted to see it with a game. The teacher-educator had a reading analysis instead. Another example of this is in the second interview when another participant teacher-educator said that he tried to adapt the class objectives to student’s likes, although it was very difficult sometimes because they wanted more activities that are entertaining.

The conceptualization that we highlight from these insights is that the participant teacher-educators and the student’s objectives configure the classes depending on how those ones are adapted in class. In the following figure, we explain this result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Evidences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The participant teacher-educators consider a series of aspects in terms</td>
<td><strong>Students’ needs:</strong> In the BA, students are studying for being teachers. Although, the participant teacher-educators consider that one of the needs of students had to do with their major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of objectives, the students’ major, needs and preferences.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class activities 'fun'</td>
<td>One of the teacher participants' said that the idea was to make the class activities 'fun' for the students. Although, the idea that students and teachers have about 'fun' activities are no equal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The participant teacher-educators and the student’s objectives configure the classes depending on how those ones are adapted in class itself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Objective-based preparation in lesson planning.

**Focus of classes in lesson planning.** This result points to the reasons that the participant teacher-educators highlight to teach different classes such as Language and Communication, Intercultural Communication, Material Design or Degree Work. When the participant teacher-educators are planning their classes, they take into account what they want their students to achieve in terms of language or content. Both of them are crucial for learning a language as we could identify in one the answers of the questions in the second interview. The participant teacher-educators said that both language and content were important by taking into account the subjects and level of the students, thus, the students know how to use the language in any situation effectively.

We found that the participant teacher-educators said that content is the key of everything and language was second in the class. However, they said that it just could happen when they know what the level of the students is or if they had already acquired the expected level. The participant teacher-educators said that it is a process, as when the students are beginning to learn English, they need grammatical structures, but when they are advanced students they could use the content with the language implicitly. This conceptualization gave us the idea that the lesson planning that the participant teacher-educators prepare for the class changes depending on the subject that they are focusing on. There could then be content-based or language-based orientation courses. This means, a general idea about what the participant teacher-educators think about content-based and language-based orientation
during their classes amends what should be taught.

Nevertheless, all the participant teacher-educators agreed that the focus of the subject could vary depending on the student's' level. They mentioned that the way in which content- or language-based classes should be taught depends on the student's' level, language-based should be the main orientation for beginner students, and content should be oriented after the students are more involved with the language.

The conceptualization that we highlight from these insights is that lesson plan orient towards the condition of what class is it for, say content- or language-based, and what English proficiency level the students display. In the following figure, we explain this result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Evidences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This result was found by the reason that the participant teacher-educators teach different classes such as: Language and Communication, Intercultural Communication, Material Design or Degree Work.</td>
<td><strong>Content</strong>: content is the key of everything and language is second in the class, however teacher-educators said that it just could happen when teachers know what is the level of the student or if they had already acquired the expected level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Content-based and language-based orientation</strong>: They mentioned that the way in which both of them should be taught was: for beginners, language-based should be the main orientation for students, and content should be oriented after the students are more involved with the language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of content and language based orientation is used by the teacher-educators depending on the English level that the students already have and the format that they are following (Syllabus).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. Focus of classes in lesson planning.*

**Students’ background in planning.** It refers to everything that is behind of each student, taking into account, personal life, knowledge and environment, and how those aspects influence within the class success from the student’s perspectives. We found in the observations that the participant teacher-educators often take into account the student’s background. The participant teacher-educators also said that background contains family, academic and personal environment or better called “space time”. All these aspects are part
of the environment of the students, and they have to be taken into account in lesson planning. The participant teacher-educators said that it was important to ask students about the topic that they were going to study, it means if they have seen or listened to something about this before. We also found that for the participant teacher-educators the student’s development as individuals is important. For participant teacher-educators, when planning, factors such as student’s personality and personal life were determined factors to find the most accurate activities for them. Besides, the participant teacher-educators said that knowing the weaknesses that students have from previous semesters is vital for the class planning.

The conceptualization that we highlight from these insights is that the participant teacher-educators conceive the students’ background in terms of teaching English as what the students have done with the language all along their lives, such as traveling abroad, taking English courses and practicing on their own. In the first interview, we found that the participant teacher-educators found helpful the act of “eliciting” students because it was a way to know their background and make students participate and get different conclusions about a specific topic. In the following figure, we explain this result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Evidences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the participant teacher-educators it is everything that is behind of each student, taking into account, personal life, knowledge and environment.</td>
<td><strong>Environment:</strong> Background is contextualized by concepts such as: family, academic and personal environment or better called for her “space time” For the teacher-educator interviewed, all those concepts mentioned before are part of the environment of the students, and they have to be taken into account in planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous knowledge:</strong> Is important to ask students about the topic that they were going to study, it means if they have seen or listened to something about this before.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher-educators conceive the students’ background in terms of teaching English as what the students have done with the language all along their lives.

*Table 4.* Students’ background in lesson planning.

**Student’s context in planning.** In the data, the participant teacher-educators take into
account the context of the students when they are going to plan, it means the age, the English level, the semester and human values, societal and cultural forces. The participant teacher-educators said that planning a class is not just to learn English but also to be a good human being and a good person for society. They also say that it was important to know the students’ abilities, meaning their level in order to prepare accurate classes. However, the participant teacher-educators referred to the context as a tool, which can be used as a way to teach English in a real way, where the students’ can display effectively the language in specific situations of their own context. For the participant teacher-educators, context is the one that shows students’ experiences referring to the language in aspects such as culture, social situation and family. The participant teacher-educators said that the context corresponds to the students’ needs. Knowing the student’s context allows them to plan classes in which the student’s needs are more accounted.

With those examples, the conceptualization that we highlight is that context represents students not only as academics but also as people, so it configures classes at the point of what students contribute to the class. In the following figure, we explain this result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Evidences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-educators take into account the context of the students when they are going to plan, it means the age, the English level, the semester and human values, societal and cultural forces.</td>
<td><strong>Humanity</strong>: Planning a class not just to learn English but also to be a good human being and a good person for society is important in this context of English language teacher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context as a tool</strong>: Teacher-educators referred to the context as a tool, which can be used as a way to teach English in a real way, where the students’ can display effectively the language in specific situations of their own context.</td>
<td><strong>Context goes beyond of the learning and teaching area. It means also, that the context represents the students as a human that can contribute to the class with his own real life experiences.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teaching strategies in lesson planning.** We found in this conception that the kind of classes that the participant teacher-educators are going to teach and how they are going to
address them seek for the best way to lead the students’ learning in a smooth way. In the second interview specifically, we saw that the participant teacher-educators mostly considered learning to be the base of the class in order to develop knowledge. For the participant teacher-educators, it is important to “think in English” specifically through the language skills, because those ones allow students to relate the language with the world.

We also found that for the participant teacher-educator reflection on the positive things and the things to get better in the class is crucial for further lesson planning. They also said to reflect about the activities that were successful or not. Two of the participant teacher-educators mentioned that the best strategy for making a lesson plan is getting to know the student’s previous knowledge so they can make an entire frame about the goals or objectives to reach during the class or the number of classes of a topic. However, one of the participant teacher-educators mentioned that there is not a perfect strategy for teaching English, the best thing that a participant teacher-educator can do in terms of strategies is trying to integrate all the communicative skills in a class so the students can always be practicing how to display those skills in real life situations. Likewise, another participant teacher-educator considers working on the student's’ language competences to be the best way to learn a language, which may lead to develop student’s critical thinking. In the aids that we found, the participant teacher-educators use a format where they grade the students’ performance, the students’ general behaviors, and attitudes. In this way, feedback on the students’ process is more documented.

The conceptualization that we highlight from these insights is that participant teacher-educators do not just focus on the curriculum but they analyze which is the most accurate strategy to develop with students and if it works or not. The following figure explains this result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching strategies in lesson planning (Figure 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Is the kind of classes that the participant teacher-educators are going to teach and how they are going to address them, seeking the best way to lead the students’ learning in a smooth way

**Reflection:** Teacher-educator reflect on the positive things and the things to get better in the class that they did is crucial for further lesson planning.

**Previous knowledge:** Know the student’s previous knowledge so they can make an entire frame about the goals or objectives that are supposed to be achieved during the class or the number of classes of a topic or term.

Teaching strategies are the aspects that the teacher-educators use in order to reflect upon the class in terms of success. In addition, to know student’s previous knowledge.

**Discussion**

The discussion of our research project is seen under the achievement of the objectives proposed. We want to start this discussion with our first finding about subjectivity in lesson planning. Although Harmer (1998) states that some teacher-educators do not plan their classes due to their experience, in our result we found that the participant teachers do plan their classes, depending on their own related conceptions and theory. Harmer (1998) also states that some teachers need to have an overall shape about the class, considering students’ perspectives while developing the class. Although in our results about subjectivity this may happen as Harmer suggests, we identified that sometimes they just do not formalize the planning into a form or template, sometimes they just make an agenda, mental or shortly written in their notebooks. This practice is related to their personal and subjective conceptions about lesson planning.

Our discussion follows with the premise that there are different stages to plan a class. As Maxom (2009) says, “There are three stages: An initial stage in which you teach new information; another in which you practice what you have just presented in a controlled way, and a final stage that involves students expressing themselves with less guidance from you” (p. 59). Complementarily, Guiseppe (1985) affirms that before stating the stages of lesson planning, it is important to take into account questions such as what, who, and how to teach.
This author also proposes that steps for planning are the planning itself, execution, and evaluation. As we could see in our research, teacher-educators go through the theoretical path in the stages of the class, so they recognized that it is fundamental to have an order in it, as the mentioned authors suggest. Nevertheless, teacher educators do not follow the stated stages; they seem to hold a personal organization of their classes. It means, although teacher educators know and acknowledge the lesson planning stages stated in theoretical foundations, they often prefer to trust in their own concepts. Therefore, in the planning of their classes they make a mix of what they think and what related theory says. In our point of view, this conception is useful for contextual lesson planning.

A third point to discuss is that participant teacher-educators have their own objectives for their teaching practices. In this conception, we know that they arrive to the class with planned-specific objectives for the class. However, those objectives seem to be only for their teaching practices but not necessarily for the students’ learning achievements. Although, Fink (2005) says that objectives are necessary for the teacher (educators) to ask themselves questions about students, critical thinking, and the teaching context, in our research, we identified that teacher-educators seek for the development of students’ critical thinking, but most of the times, the class objectives are bound for the development of the lesson topics. Thus, we can say that theoretical foundations about lesson planning do not necessarily agree with what teacher-educators think about it. Example of this is also the content- and language-based orientation as an essential part in lesson planning.

As we are now talking about the class itself, another point to discuss is on the factors that affect lesson planning; for instance, student’s background and context. The former considers students’ personal life, knowledge, environment, and perspectives. The latter addresses students’ age, English level, semester, and socio-cultural forces. In concordance with Fink (2005), students’ background and context impose definite limitations and
guidelines on teacher-educators to design a significant learning experience. Likely, teacher-educators’ knowledge about these class factors related to students limits their perspective towards students’ learning. Teacher participants seems to agree with these theoretical foundations; however, they sometimes consider the students’ background and context a little when stating for the class objectives of their lesson plans.

Our last point to discuss is the different teaching strategies display in the design and application of lesson plans. One of our authors, Maxom (2009) sees teaching strategies as the way in which teacher-educators select information to teach in their lessons. Another author, Giuseppe (1985) states that teaching strategies in lesson planning involve the execution, check, verification, and reorientation of students’ learning progress. Our results show that teacher-educators create a format in order to verify whether the class succeeded or not, but mostly in terms of the content goals. This verification triggers reflection for further teaching strategies in their lesson plans. With the data collected, we were unable to verify how much of that reflection is on reorientation of students’ learning progress.

Conclusions

Throughout all the process of this research we intend to seek an accurate answer to the question which was related to teacher educator’s pedagogical conceptions. From that point, we obtained the respective answer as it is exposed in the conclusions below. Each of the objectives proposed were also reached properly according to our results in which we identify, describe and understand the teacher educator’s set of conceptions about lesson planning.

Teacher educators of the BA program in Spanish, English, and French display pedagogical conceptions about how they plan their lessons from their own, giving slight account of students’ background, context, and learning process; although they reported to do so as part of the factors when planning their classes.
In their set of conceptions, lesson planning must take into account class time, class type (content- or language-based), lesson topics, teaching purposes, proficiency level, and reflections from previous classes. These factors have theoretical and experiential foundations for the participant teacher-educators.

From this research project, despite the conceptions mentioned in the results, other conceptions appeared in the development of the participant teacher educators’ classes. Although, teacher-educators have some pre-established conceptions about planning a class, depending on the development of each class, those conceptions are re-arranged in situ. Thus, the “manner of the execution” of a lesson plan is not always directed and accomplished as is expected.

The way in which teacher-educators configure their classes, depending on their conceptions, aims to the definition of the development of an English language class perspective. Nevertheless, it is seen from a very subjective idea. This is why our study states teacher-educators’ different conceptions in one specific context with varied situational characteristics; besides, the manner in which those conceptions can be reapplied or taken into account in the English language classes in the program. These statements could be useful for pre-service teachers who have the responsibility to understand and plan lessons depending on the different factors they find in each classroom.
Annexes:

Design of first interview

1. Would you like to tell us about your previous studies and your experience teaching English?
2. What classes do you teach?
3. How do you prepare your class?
4. Do you have steps in your lessons? Which ones? Why?
5. On what do you reflect before and after giving your lessons?
6. On what teaching aspects do you focus more? and why?

Design of the second interview

1. What teaching strategies are always appropriate for lesson planning?
2. In your lesson planning, do the stated objectives always match the student's' preferences, needs, and moods?
3. When do you think the class should have a content-based orientation, and when a language-based orientation?
3.1 Do you think there could be a class that is content-based and language-based at the same time?
4. What is "students' background" for you?
4.1 What is "students' context" for you?
4.2 How much they account for both in your lesson planning?

Design of the questionnaire

This questionnaire will give us a general idea about teacher’s lesson planning thoughts. Feel free to answer these questions with your real ideas. The objective of this is to have some results in our research about lesson planning. The answers and conclusions of this just will be used for this research.
1. When do you prepare your classes? (Example): For the whole semester, quarterly, monthly, before the class, among others. Explain it.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. What do you take into account when you prepare your classes? (Example): lesson plan, didactic unit, improvisation, a specific format, among others.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3. What do you use as a reference or source to plan your classes? Explain it.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

4. How do you plan the lesson to teach (e.g. class structure, material implementation, steps or sequence of the class activities - any action for teaching or learning the language)?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

5. How do you manage time when planning?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

6. How do you decide what to teach and how to do it?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Observation log design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Language Skills</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Materials</td>
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<td>Development</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>Closing</td>
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<td>Time</td>
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Observations and recordings

The observation and recording of the classes will let us know if the teacher develops different meanings of pedagogical conceptions about lesson planning. The objective of this is to have results in our research about lesson planning. If you agree with your class be observed please, sign below.

______________________________
References


