



# THE IMPORTANCE OF A WELL DESIGNED LESSON PLAN

*[H]uman resources are like natural resources; they're often buried deep. You have to go looking for them, they're not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves.*

*—Sir Ken Robinson*



# Aims

- Refresh your thinking about why we plan lessons.
- Identify what an effective lesson plan looks like.
- Explore some evidence of the impact of a good lesson plan.
- To identify next steps.

# Classroom scenario

Miss Smith has just taught an earthquakes lesson to her Year 4 class. She is now sitting in the classroom talking to her colleague, Mr Booth.

*“The lesson didn’t go very well at all. The children did not learn anything and they looked so confused. I do not know why,”* says Miss Smith, wiping a tear from her eyes.

*“Let me help. I am so sorry that you are upset. Do you have your lesson plan?”* replies Mr Booth.

Miss Smith hands Mr Booth her lesson plan.

*“Tell me about this activity here that says ‘Tell students about earthquakes’.”*

*“I planned to tell them some interesting facts about earthquakes,”* answers Miss Smith.

What are your thoughts about why Miss Smith's lesson didn't go well?



Classroom scenario continued.....

“But, what are the children doing at that point and what facts are you telling them? And, can I ask, how long are you spending on this activity?” asks Mr Booth.

“Well, I just knew that I needed to relay information about earthquakes. Maybe next time, I need to plan exactly what facts the students need to know; what activity the students will do to complete the learning; and how long I will spend on the task. Maybe my lack of planning was why the lesson didn't go well.”

Miss Smith benefited from sharing her lesson plan with Mr Booth. She has realised that her plan needs more detail in order to engage her students.

# Why is a lesson plan so important?

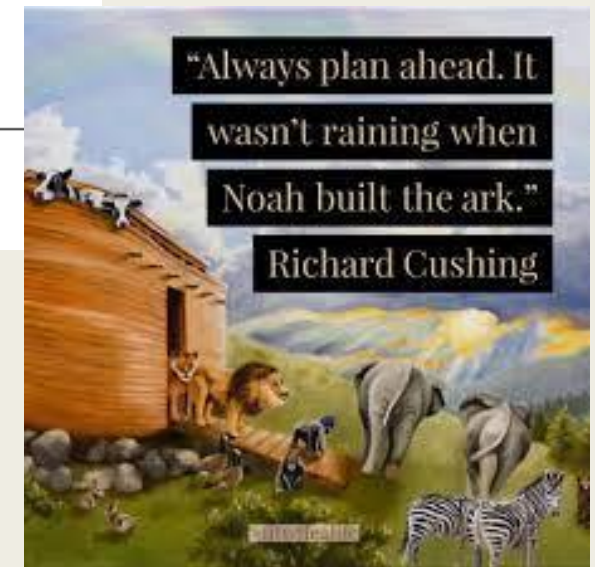
- Meaningful and effective lesson plans that are well-thought through are ones that have clear purpose, both to you and the learners you teach.



**“**  
“Before anything else,  
preparation is the key  
to success.”

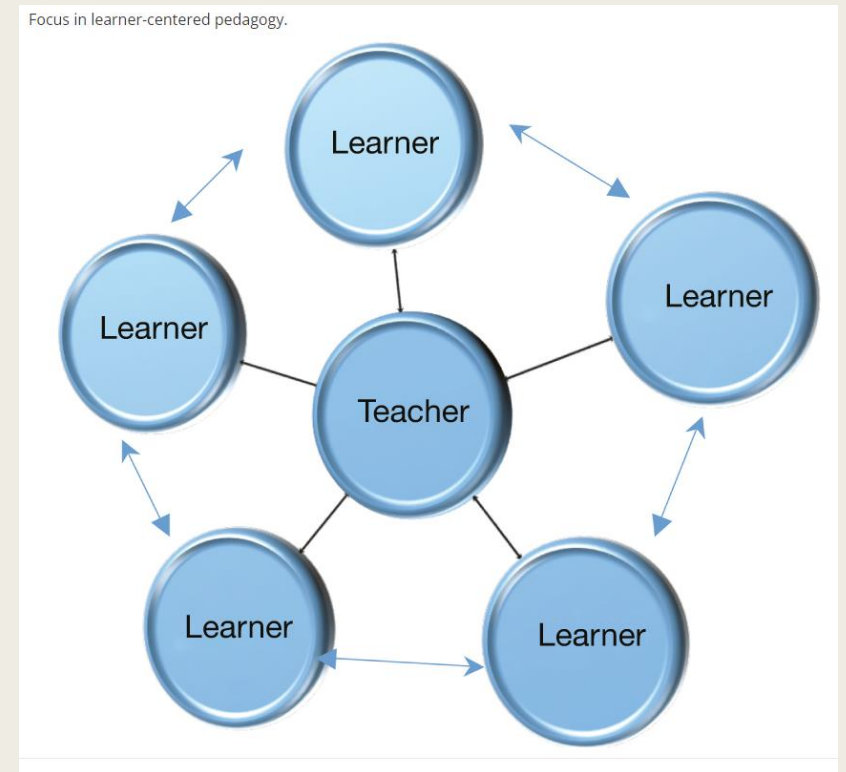
A graphic featuring a quote by Alexander Graham Bell. The text is centered on a white background, with a large green vertical bar behind the opening quotation mark.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL



# Why do we need lesson plans?

- The lesson plan is designed around the **learning objective(s)**, and provides learners with an opportunity to **explore, build,** and **demonstrate** their learning.
- This approach should allow the learning environment to be **learner-centred** as opposed to one which is very teacher-centred.



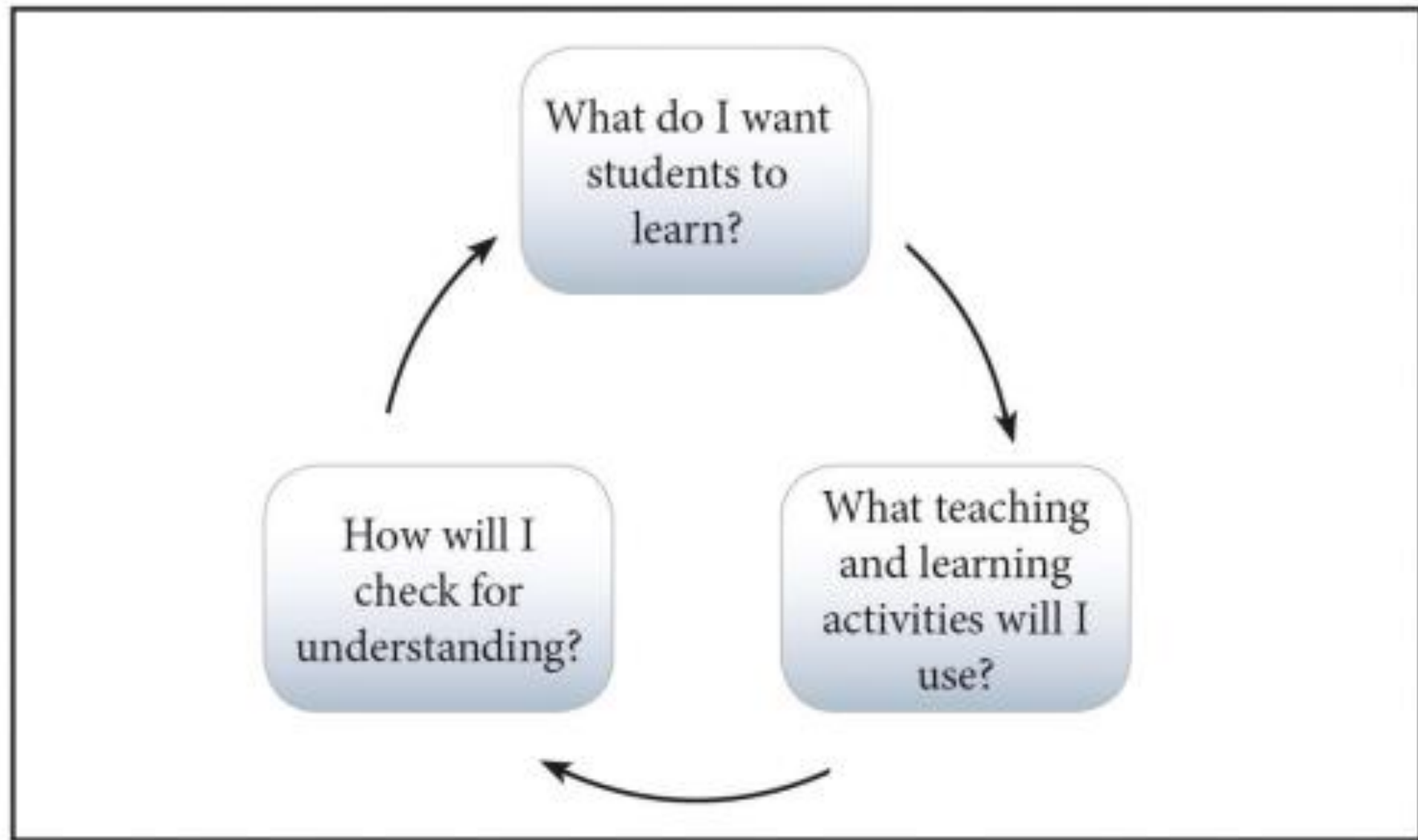
# Why do we need lesson plans?

- Lesson plans are an essential part of the teacher's toolbox and are developed by a teacher to **guide** the entire session so that every key part of the teaching session is appropriately planned, prepared and implemented in order to achieve the learning outcome(s).





A good lesson plan considers .....



**Fig. 1. Key Components of Lesson Plan Design (L. Dee Fink, 2005)**

# Why plan a lesson?

‘gives teachers the opportunity to think **deliberately** about their choice of:

- lesson objectives
- the types of activities that will meet these objectives
- the sequence of those activities
- the materials needed
- how long each activity might take; and
- how students should be grouped.’

*The Importance of Planning*, Richard James Rogers

# What should a lesson plan include?

**Step 1 – Learning Outcomes** - What is to be learned as a result of this lesson?

Any teaching session needs to be carefully designed so that learners can achieve the learning outcomes for the session. The first step is to compile the learning outcomes for the session.

Note that these may be provided based on learning outcomes from a previously designed curriculum which is likely to be based on the National Curriculum.

Bloom's taxonomy is often used for developing learning outcomes. It is based on three overlapping categories ordered in degree of difficulty; each category/ level must be mastered before progressing to the next.

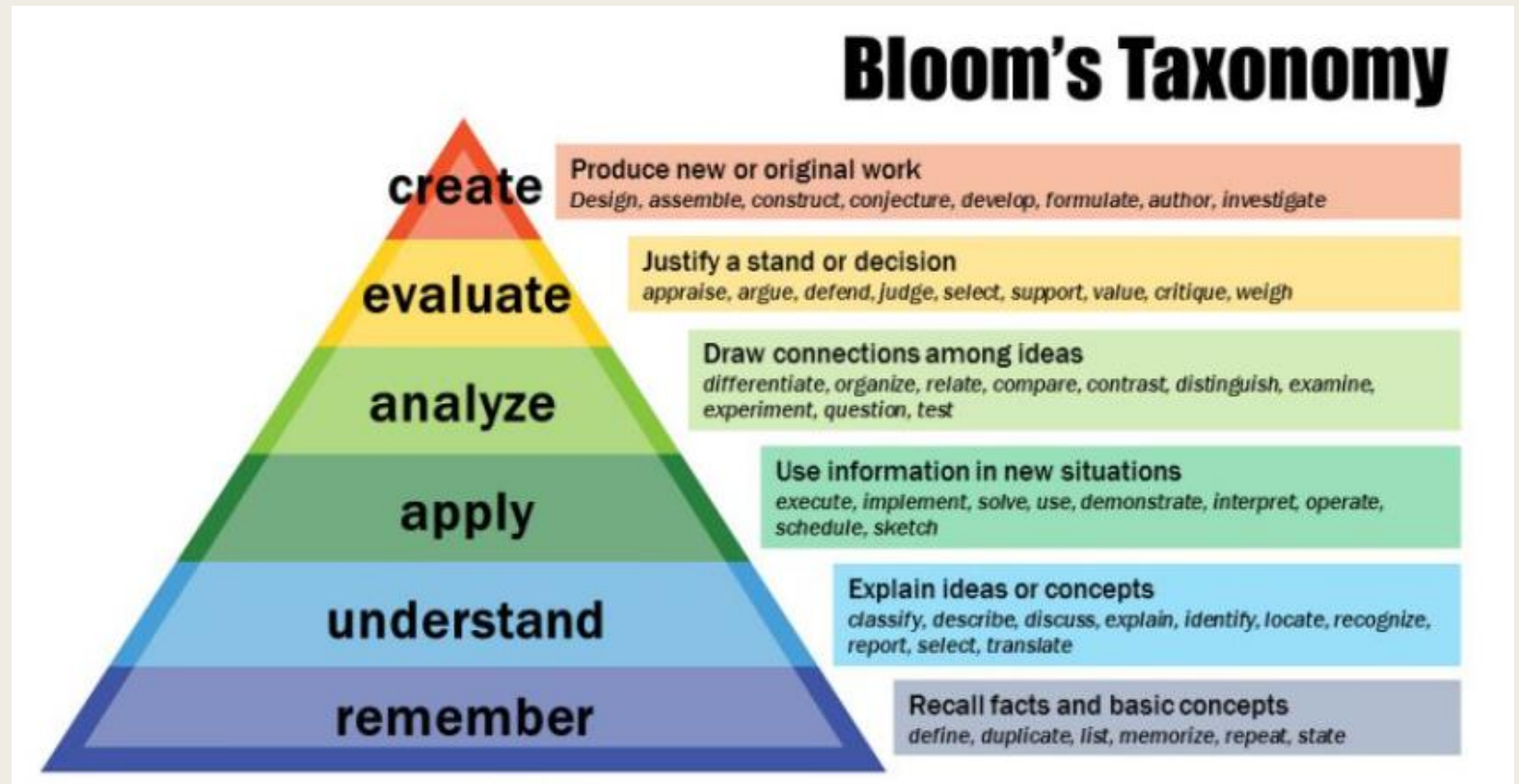
These are:

Cognitive domain  
(knowledge)

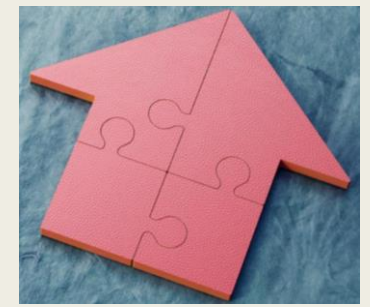
Affective domain  
(attitude)

Psychomotor domain  
(skills)

Bloom's taxonomy can also be depicted as a pyramid that progresses from the simplest form of learning (recall) to the most complex (evaluate).



# What should a lesson plan include?



**Step 2 – Learning plan-** Methodology/Structure of session, types/sequence and time of activities, role of children/ teacher at each stage

Teaching methods need to be selected that would be **appropriate** for the learner group size, their past experiences, and any other relevant characteristics of the group. Within the group of learners, skill levels might vary so you might consider whether to **audit** their baseline knowledge and skills before you begin your session (Step 3 of lesson plan). If you cannot do that, try to ensure that the teaching method and lesson materials take into account likely variations in knowledge and skill levels across the group.

The most effective learning takes place when it is **relevant** and **timely** so it should be based on real needs placed within appropriate contexts.

Students learn very effectively from each other so do try to encourage **peer learning/ peer instruction** and design activities that provide formal and/or informal opportunities for students to share knowledge and skills. The more active the learning experience, the higher the learning achieved.

# What should a lesson plan include?



**Step 2 – Learning plan-** Methodology/Structure of session, types/sequence and time of activities, role of children/ teacher at each stage

**Anticipate the unexpected.** Increase your impact further by looking for points in your lesson where students are likely to struggle, make mistakes or develop misconceptions. Don't try to stop them happening. Instead, become sensitive to them, and expose and address them head on when they arise. If necessary, make them yourself.

Consider whether the teaching method you have selected is **feasible** given the physical environment (the type and size of the teaching room, its location, and facilities), the time available (both for preparation and teaching).



# What should a lesson plan include?

## Step 3 – Assessment –

Before Lesson -how will you assess baseline knowledge/ understanding of the children?

During the lesson – How will you assess the learners throughout so that you know if they are making progress in the session? (hinge questioning, lolly pop sticks, whiteboards, stash and flash, do now etc)

If you want to improve your lesson planning, you'll need a strong sense of what's working and what's not in your classroom. This is almost impossible to do without reliable and efficient methods of assessing pupil progress.

After lesson - how will you assess if learning outcomes were achieved?



# What should a lesson plan include?

## Step 4 – Resources required during your teaching session

(Books; worksheets; handouts; flip charts, iPads, art materials etc):

Make a checklist to help you remember what you will need. This would include text books, journal articles, worksheets or handouts, flip charts and pens, computers, projectors, internet access, whiteboard marker pens, etc.

It is a good idea to list other things such as a bottle of drinking water, a laser pointer or remote slide controller that you might want for your personal use.





# What should a lesson plan include?

## Step 5 – Evaluation

### ■ Learner evaluation-

- Was the session too difficult/ easy/just right?
- Were children motivated? Why/ why not?
- Did the children achieve the learning outcomes?

### ■ Teacher evaluation-

- Did the children behave appropriately and as expected?
- Did they remain interested throughout and contribute?
- Was your questioning/discussion effective?
- What have you learned? How would you amend/improve your input if you were to repeat this session in future?



# Look at these two VERY basic lesson plan. Which do you think is more effective?

## Lesson Plan A

Objective: to get better words in your work

Task 1: Tell children that some words are better than others (10m)

Task 2: Let them improve their work (10m)

Task 3: Hand it in and summarise the lesson (10m)

## Lesson Plan B

Objective: improve vocabulary and apply these words in my writing

Task 1: Re-define vocabulary. Write 3 words for walk (stroll, march, stomp) onto the board. Ask children which word is better/more appropriate via 'no hands up' (10m)

Task 2: Children to circle 5 words from their work that they want to improve. Share with their partner. Children to discuss improvements and decide on replacement. Teacher to circulate the room(10m)

Task 3: Share good responses to class and praise. Ask children what the impact has been to the standard of their work and why they should think about word choices (10m)

# What is the impact of an effective lesson plan?

- **Establishing a positive and consistent classroom environment** – allows students to feel supported.
- **Beginning lessons by giving clear and constructive instructions** – allows children to feel motivated and understand connections between lessons.
- **Maintaining attention and using appropriate pacing** – allows children to remain engaged.
- **Smoothly transitioning between activities** – allows children to understand connections between learning
- **Evaluating what has taken place in your lesson** – allows you to understand what your children need next.
- **Developing positive teacher/child relationships** – allows you to be a positive role model to your children.

## HOW EFFECTIVE IS MY LESSON PLAN?

### IS THE LEARNING OBJECTIVE SPECIFIC AND CONNECTED TO PREVIOUS LEARNING?



What did I teach previously? How is this lesson connected?



Is it clear what I want them to do?  
Why do they need to learn it?  
Have I thought through the steps?

## HOW EFFECTIVE IS MY LESSON PLAN?

**DOES IT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOU TO CHECK WHAT THE LEARNERS KNOW AND IF THERE ARE ANY GAPS?**



**Do my learners know what I think they know? Did they learn what I wanted them to learn in the previous lesson?**



**Do I need to go back over anything again? Are they ready to move on?**

## HOW EFFECTIVE IS MY LESSON PLAN?

**DOES IT PROVIDE TIME FOR YOU TO MODEL AND FOR THE LEARNERS TO THEN PRACTISE?**



How long will it take for me to model and demonstrate the activity to my class? Do I have enough time?



Have I planned enough time for the learners to practise? What will I do if they need more time?



## HOW EFFECTIVE IS MY LESSON PLAN?

**DOES IT INCLUDE ACTIVITIES FOR ALL LEARNERS - THOSE WHO CAN WORK INDEPENDENTLY AND THOSE WHO NEED SUPPORT?**



Have I planned activities for all the learners in my class? Do the tasks clearly link to the learning objective?



Does it include activities for those who will need more support?

# Reflection

DOES THE LESSON PLAN FLOW? 

## How effective are your lesson plans?

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# Next steps

Reflect regularly on WHY we plan lessons. They need to serve a purpose for you AND your learners, otherwise they are a waste of time!



What are you going to take with you from today?

*“The star teachers of the 21st Century will be those teachers who work everyday to improve teaching — not only their own, but that of the whole profession.” — James Stigler*

