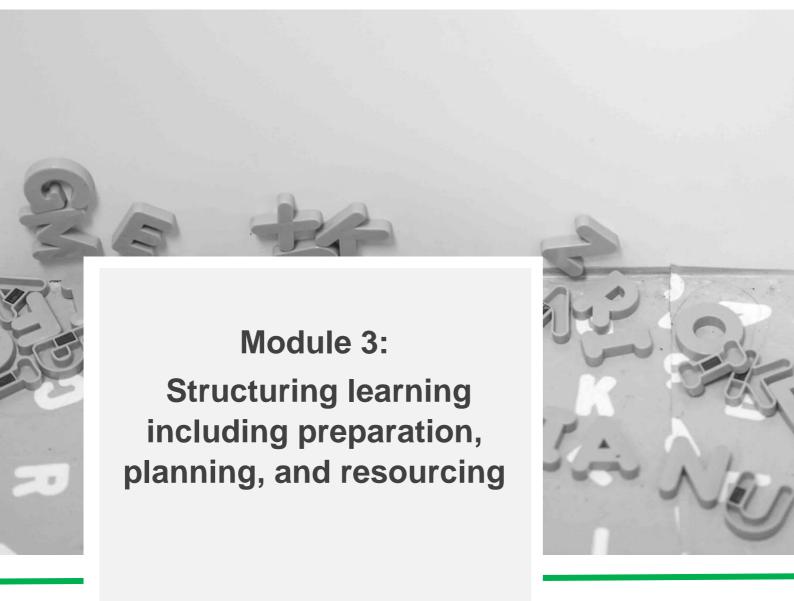# ELT + V

EMPOWERING LANGUAGE TEACHERS INCLUDING NON-SPECIALIST VOLUNTEERS

Project number 2020-1-UK01-KA204-078807

ELT+V
Empowering Language Teachers
including non-specialist volunteers

Module 3:

Structuring learning including preparation, planning, and resourcing

With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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MODULE 3

General Introduction

As language teachers we constantly ask ourselves how we can support our learners' language learning with our lessons successfully. In this module we would like to introduce you to the concept of learning objectives as a powerful tool for structuring not only learning, but also your teaching. Defining appropriate, motivating and achievable learning objectives for your group of learners can guide you through your lesson planning, but it also helps you to centre your teaching around your learners and gives them the opportunity to assess their own progress. We will conclude with a chapter on strategies to engage your learners and to provide an environment for their active participation.

1. The role of learning objectives for teaching languages

Take a moment and think about your last teaching session. Identify what was it that learners should have been able to do at the end of the session, that they had not been able to do before?

Learning objectives as the goal to be achieved by the learners

This transformation in the learner's capabilities is what we mean when we use the term learning objective. They set a goal for the learners to achieve through the session.

You will also find learning objectives in recent language learning books or online resources, here is an example:

> **What you will do**
>
> This unit is about meeting people. These are the skills you will practise.
> Which are the most useful for you? Tick the boxes.
>
> **Listening and speaking**
>
> | Skill | Skill code |
> | --- | --- |
> | ☐ Talk about people's lives and things they did in the past | Lr/E2.2a, 2b, 2c, 2d; Sc/E2.2c, 2d, 3a, 3b |
> | ☐ Meet and greet people | Lr/E2.1d, 6b; Sd/E2.1a; Sc/E2.1a |
> | ☐ Apologise and give reasons | Sc/E2.3d |
> | ☐ Describe people | Sc/E2.2f, 3f |
>
> **Reading and writing**
>
> | Skill | Skill code |
> | --- | --- |
> | ☐ Write about things that happened in the past | Ww/E2.1b; Rw/E2.3a, 4a |
> | ☐ Write about people and their lives | Wt/E2.1a; Ws/E2.1a |
> | ☐ Read texts about people and their lives | Rw/E2.2a, 1b; Rt/E2.1a, 4a; Rs/E2.1b |

Figure 1 Education and Training foundation (2021). ESOL Learner Materials, Entry 2, Unit 2.
https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf700

Focus on communicative skills when establishing learning objectives

As you see in the example above, the learning objectives focus mainly on communicative skills regarding the four **competencies** (for in-depth information of the highlighted terms, go to activity 3.2). To acquire those skills a whole lot of different partial skills are required, that involve grammatical structures, vocabulary, phonetics or cultural knowledge.

ANNEX 3.1.
Reflection on learning objectives

ANNEX 3.2.
Reflection of highlighted terms and glossary

Those partial skills of course need to be trained during the lessons (see chapter 3.3), but it is extremely helpful to use global learning objectives like the ones above as a common thread for your sessions.

In an **action-oriented approach** where learners are seen *as "language users and social agents, and thus seeing language as a vehicle for communication rather than as a subject to study"* (Council of Europe 2020, 29), it is essential to think about communicative tasks when designing learning objectives. According to this approach language teaching should foremost enable learners to tackle tasks in the foreign language. Tasks, that they are likely to encounter in their everyday life.

Learning objectives as guidance when making decisions for teaching

Often, especially in the context of a formal language course, the content that needs to be conveyed in the time given according to the curriculum can be overwhelming: vocabulary, grammatical structures, phonetics, cultural aspects. Having broad learning objectives linked to the learner's reality can help you decide, what is relevant for your group of learners and to prioritise.

Think of a lesson scenario, where timewise you are far behind, and you have to edit quickly and spontaneously which parts you will leave out. Take into consideration the session's learning objective to decide what is indispensable for the learners in order to achieve the objective.

Or consider this scenario: You are in doubt about using which activities you want the learners to approach a certain goal. Think about the skill they need to achieve the learning objective. If it is a speaking task, you should train the speaking, if it is a writing task, you should take time to train exactly that. It is not enough to just provide all the input (grammar, vocabulary, sentence stems, cultural facts) and hope for the learners to assemble them into a meaningful output. Language learning works like a muscle and the skills must be trained. This applies especially to speaking which for a lot of people is associated with social anxiety and should be prepared thoroughly.

Making progress measurable for teaches and learners

While learning objectives can guide you as a teacher through your teaching, they also give guidance to the learner. They make the academic goals that they are expected to achieve transparent and therefore give meaning to the activities you prepared. This enhances motivation by providing answers to questions like

"Why do I have to do this?"

or

"When am I ever going to use this?"

A lack of transparency regarding the learning objectives can result in frustration, confusion and can strongly impede the learning process.

Communicating learning objectives clearly also gives the students the chance to check in on how they are doing. Look at the examples in Fig.1 again. Which would be the tasks you could end a teaching session with, that correspond to the skills, the learners are expected to train?

Learning objectives as a way to enhance learner autonomy

Transparent learning objectives and the opportunity for learners to assess their skills gained is a significant step towards **learner autonomy**.

Lessons that follow the principle of learner autonomy support the learners in reflecting upon their own learning process. By self-reflection the learners gain control and take charge of what and how they want to learn. It also enables them to learn independently and take the learning out of the classroom and into their individual life situation.

FURTHER READING

For more on learning objectives:
Gunner, J. (2021). Well-written examples of learning objectives. Your dictionary.
https://examples.yourdictionary.com/well-written-examples-of-learning-objectives.html

For more information on the action-oriented approach:
LincDire (2018). *Tutorial 4. The Action-Oriented Approach.*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pE1rFDpNfhk

Picardo, Enrica (2014). *From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A RESEARCH PATHWAY.*
https://www.lincdireproject.org/wp-content/uploads/ResearcherShareFolder/Readings/From%20Communicative%20to%20Action-Oriented.pdf

More on preparing for speaking:
British Council (2020). *Teaching English. Teaching Speaking Skills 1.*
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teaching-speaking-skills-1

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2. How to set learning objectives for your group of learners

Types of learning objectives meeting different competencies: knowledge, skills and attitude

For phrasing learning objectives it is helpful to work with can-do-statements (as opposed to know-statements). It helps you to focus on communicative skills, that will be helpful for your learners to apply in real life. As we saw in Fig.1, those kind of learning objectives refer to the skills, that the learners are meant to strengthen through the lesson.

But there are also other kinds of learning objectives and ideally, they are interconnected and contribute to each other:

- ✓ **KNOWLEDGE:** These are cognitive learning objectives that describe what a person knows that he or she has not known before. Often this refers to the system of the language, but it could also be cultural knowledge.
  Example: The learner knows how to form the past participle of verbs.
- ✓ **SKILLS:** These are pragmatic learning objectives that describe what a learner can do after a training session.
  Example: The learner can introduce himself / herself to a peer.
- ✓ **ATTITUDE:** This refers to learning objectives that describe a transformation of what learners feel, think or want. These could lie in the realm of interculturality or reflection on their own learning.
  Example: The learner is sensitized for intercultural differences on how to politely decline an offer.
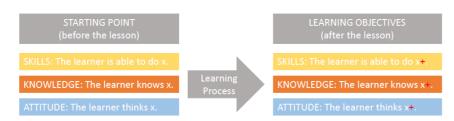

Figure 2 Fields of learning objectives

In an action-oriented approach learning objectives that concentrate merely on knowledge about the mechanics of the language system do not serve the intention of designing purposeful lessons, that enable the students to perform in the foreign language. It is of course important to know the rules that the language system is made of, but knowing the rules is just a means to an end, that is enabling communication - for the learners to understand and be understood.

If you wish to introduce possessive pronouns, for the learners to get to know and use those is an operational learning objective that will ultimately serve a communicative objective like enabling the learner to introduce their family.

ANNEX 3.5.
Types of learning objectives

Learning objectives vs. teaching objectives: putting the learner in the centre

We ended the previous chapter with the importance of making learning objectives transparent, which is an indispensable foundation for keeping the learners motivated and more likely to achieve the objectives. But have you ever taught a lesson you put together yourself or adapted from a course book and realized while teaching: This task is not relevant to my group of learners at all!

Especially when working with refugees or asylum seekers, the teacher's living situation is most probably very different from their learners' and it is part of the teacher's job to take the learners' perspective and evaluate which relevant tasks the learners need to be prepared for.

Involving the learners in the process of defining learning objectives

In a formal course setting, especially aimed at the target group, the curriculum will be designed for the needs of that group. But as we discovered in chapter 1, there is hardly any group of learners that is homogeneous and can be catered for by a one-size-fits-all-approach, in fact the learners' individual desired and/or needed learning outcomes might be as numerous as the number of learners in your classroom.

In the spirit of learner autonomy, why don't you have the learners set the goals themselves?

Especially when your learners are at a beginner's level getting access to their individual motivations and objectives can be challenging. Also, some learners due to the learning culture they experienced earlier might not be used to taking an active part in their learning and share their motivations. So, they have to be guided in expressing their personal motivations.

For example, you could prepare a worksheet with the question

Why do you want to learn the target language?

and provide several options:

I want to

- ✓ *Talk to my neighbours*
- ✓ *Buy something in a store*
- ✓ *Talk to my children's teachers*
- ✓ *Talk to my partner's family*
- ✓ *Read letters*
- ✓ *Communicate with the authorities*
- ✓ *Find a job*
- ✓ *Write a letter*
- ✓ *...*

The learners can choose one or several options.

This could be done in small groups, with the whole class or in partner work. To facilitate this for absolute beginners, you could support their understanding with pictures illustrating the above situations.

As you see, even with total beginners you can find ways to make the learners reflect on their learning motivation and learning goals.

FURTHER READING

For more on learning objectives read to:

Shabatura, J. (2013). Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Effective Learning Objectives. University of Arkansas. https://tips.uark.edu/blooms-taxonomy-verb-chart/

3. How to build lessons around learning objectives
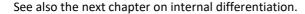
Backwards design lesson planning

The chosen learning objective is also very useful to direct you through the lesson planning process. An effective way of planning your session is to do it backwards starting with the task your learners are meant to accomplish in the end. From there go back into the different areas of language acquisition and brainstorm what partial skills and / or knowledge is necessary to achieve the learning objective. Some areas might not be touched at all and some being more relevant than others.

Figure 3: Backwards design lesson planning

Here as well you need to consider the learners' starting point. In what skill or knowledge field does your group of learners need refreshment and which fields will need particular attention?

When thinking about the partial knowledge and skills that need to be picked up by the students, it helps to keep those particularities in mind and design activities that balance out the learners' different learning conditions.

See also the next chapter on internal differentiation.

Your learners' starting point

In module 1 you have already familiarized yourself with the learner's background.

When thinking about the individual starting points of your learners it also helps to have a look at their first language. **A Multilingual Approach** to teaching and learning languages aims to embrace the learners' multilingualism. If you look at the learners' first language it allows you to acknowledge the different prerequisites for learning. Even though it is likely that you don't speak or understand that language, it helps to get familiar with the particularities of your learners first languages. It will provide insight about the specific challenges your learners face when acquiring the new language and can give you crucial clues about what to include in your teaching.

Making a lesson plan

Now you know, what your learners need to explore and train during the session, it is the raw material that your lesson will be made of.

There are different approaches to planning lessons and, depending on where you live, different didactic traditions of how to plan the lesson exactly. But in any way,

ANNEX 3.8.
Considering learners' starting point

ANNEX 3.9.
Reflection on your learners' linguistic preconditions

there is always a catalogue of key questions you should ask yourself when designing a session. Considering those aspects will give you confidence in delivering the lessons, but it also ensures that your lessons are well balanced.

We already looked into the first two:

1.   LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

What skills and knowledge should the learners train?

2.   STARTING POINT:

What knowledge / skills can be built upon? What is the competence level?

What else do you need to consider for being properly prepared?

3.   LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The next step is to think about the actual sequence of activities that the learners will do. Consider the partial skills and the fields of knowledge: which activities are suitable for the learners to acquire, train and finally apply them? What learning steps help them to approach the learning objective?

Indeed, there are different ways of sequencing activities, some being more **deductive**, and some more **inductive**, but some recommendations can be given regardless:

✓   ENGAGE – STUDY – ACTIVATE is a teaching method that supports you in organizing your lessons. It describes three stages that will occur in any well-planned lesson

ENGAGE: As we know, it is valuable in line with learner autonomy to share the learning objective with the learner. But it also enhances the receptiveness of the learners to give them opportunity to attune to the topic of the lesson. In the *Engage* phase you provide the learners with stimuli that activate the learners' existing knowledge in the field of the lesson and thereby prepare them to link the new to the known. This could be achieved by activities like a quiz, pictures, music, discussions, brainstorming or storytelling. On the one hand this delivers the context for your learning objective, on the other it is also a great way to engage positive emotions, which is one of the most vital components that support learning. Positive emotions allow us to broaden our thoughts, make connections and to be more creative.
In this phase your learners can also reactivate the knowledge they already have on the topic.

STUDY: This is the phase where the learners become conscious of a certain aspect of the language, and this may concern any linguistic field, most typically a grammatical structure. In this phase the learners systematically discover the phenomenon, analyse it, reproduce it and train using it. As a teacher you should focus on accuracy and give time and space for every individual learner to comprehend and practice.

ACTIVATE**:** Now give the learners space for applying the studied phenomenon. Provide a task, that lets the learners practice the acquired knowledge and skills in a realistic context. Ideally through automatization the learners will achieve a certain degree of fluency.

These three phases should not be understood as a strict linear schedule for the lesson. In fact, they can appear repeatedly in the course of your lesson depending on the complexity of the content and the necessity on the learners' side.

✓ Generally, proceed from easy tasks to complex tasks, building up the learners' capacities. In connection to that you can also think about how much direction do the tasks give. Is there only one right answer or does the task allow for individual variation. Start with strongly directed and progress to more open tasks.

4. INTERACTION PATTERNS

Once you have decided, what learning activities to prepare, it is necessary to think about the mode you want them to be executed in. What interaction pattern would serve the purpose of the activity most?

The form of interaction you choose can enable exchange between learners and thereby enhance social learning through cooperation. Positive group dynamics improve the motivation and participation in the classroom immensely. For more information on interaction patterns have a look at module 4.

5. RESOURCES / MEDIA

This seems like a mere formality, but to feel confident in the classroom setting you need to have your resources and the media you use organized. Think well about what resources and which media to use and then plan well what to prepare for their deployment, so that you have it at hand and don't lose much time sorting it out. If you use a white or smart board it also helps to plan how to make use of that. What do you plan to write down? Can you use colours to improve comprehensibility? What can give way to new notes and what needs to stay until the end of the session? It even helps to make a little sketch to become aware of the structure of your notes on the board.

6. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Another useful aspect of lesson preparation in addition to the learning activities is to become aware of your teaching activities. Even though the lesson should be centred around the learners and their active participation is key to a successful lesson, there is plenty of ways to enhance just that through your behaviour.

And on the other hand, the efficiency of your teaching can greatly improve, if you manage your activities wisely. How do I give instructions effectively? How do I interact with the learners in the different phases of the lesson? When can I prepare the next activity for a smooth progression with no time lost on formalities?

7. EVALUATION

As we discussed in chapter 3.1 working with transparent learning objectives has the advantage of allowing for traceability of learning success. This is the case for the teacher, who can assess, if the objective has been achieved or a follow-up is necessary. But it also is one more step towards learner autonomy. So, you should definitely give thought to your evaluation process when planning the lessons.
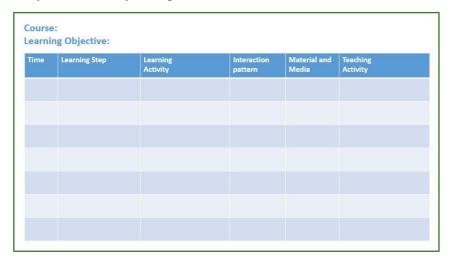
Module 5 is dedicated to assessment, where you can find out more about how to incorporate effective assessment techniques into your teaching.

One tool of resourceful lesson planning is self-assessment. If you take detailed notes in your lesson planning process it is easy to take those and comment on it after the execution of the teaching session. Take notes on what went well and what needs improvement. This saves you a lot of preparation next time you want to use your lesson planning as a resource.

Template for lesson planning

Course:
Learning Objective:

Time	Learning Step	Learning Activity	Interaction pattern	Material and Media	Teaching Activity

You can use this template (Annex 3.12.) for your own lesson planning. In the beginning this might seem a lot to consider when planning lessons, but with time and experience a lot of these aspects will become a routine. Nonetheless, when you are new to teaching these are all contributing factors towards successful teaching, so we encourage you to keep them in mind.

We also recommend giving time estimates on the single activities to keep track of your time management while delivering the lesson.

It is also helpful for your students to be told how much time they have to complete a task.

Remain flexible!

One last advice on the execution: A plan is just a plan and calls for modifications as soon as reality hits. After all, we aim for a learner-centred language learning, so it is not unlikely that the learners will also change the course of the lesson. The lesson plan and its learning objective can still lead you the way in what can be shortened or left out or what needs to be deepened.

ANNEX 3.12.
Design your own lesson plan

FURTHER READING

Find more tips on lesson planning:
https://education.yourdictionary.com/for-teachers/tips-for-writing-lesson-plans.html

More on backwards planning:
LINCDIRE (2017). *Tutorial 5: The Action-Oriented Task Template.*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MWMgkFiEHc

More on lesson planning:
Budden, J. (2008). *Lesson Planning*. British Council. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/lesson-planning

More on interaction patterns:
What is ELT? Zakime, A. (2021). *What are patterns of interaction?* https://www.whatiselt.com/single-post/2019/01/29/What-are-Patterns-of-Interaction

More on Engage – Study – Activate:
Robertson, C. (2021). *Planning 1*. British Council. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/planning-1
and
Weller, D. (2021). *What is Engage – Study – Activate?*
https://www.barefootteflteacher.com/blog/what-is-engage-study-activate

More on the impact of emotions on learning watch this video:
Cambridge University Press Espana (2016). *How emotions impact learning*.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EW7FBndUPe8
And
Immordino-Yang, M. H. (2016). *Ed-Talk: Learning with an Emotional Brain.*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEeo350WQrs

4. Factors for learner engagement

Internal differentiation: designing activities for a diverse group of learners

You might teach in a setting, where learners are grouped according to their **CEFR** competence level. This of course helps enormously to plan lessons for the needs of your group of learners. But even though your learners might have passed the same entry level test, there will always be some diversity in the classroom. And in fact, as much as it makes teaching more challenging, it also makes the classroom experience richer for everyone. Think of your own group of learners. What aspects of diversity occur in your classroom?

Naturally, when teaching adults, a great variety of life worlds, experiences and biographies come together.

Different …

- ✓ Countries of origin
- ✓ First languages
- ✓ Socio-cultural backgrounds
- ✓ Studying habits
- ✓ Religious beliefs
- ✓ Learning traditions
- ✓ Learning preferences
- ✓ Further language skills
- ✓ Levels of education
- ✓ Ages
- ✓ Motivations for learning the language
- ✓ Degrees of motivation
- ✓ Interests
- ✓ ….

And, despite a common CEFR-level, there will be differences in the language skills and knowledge.

The teacher has different tools at their disposal to deal with those heterogeneities: tools for internal differentiation.

These teaching techniques address the different needs, interests and abilities of the learners and aim to give them the best possible chance of achieving their learning goals.

These differentiation techniques don't only aim at levelling out the differences, but also at deriving benefit from those heterogeneities and optimally supporting the individual learners.

Let's have a look at the different tools of internal differentiation you can apply to make your lessons work for the whole classroom:

Grouping in homogeneous groups

It can make sense in a number of contexts when grouping for classroom activities to choose groups that are homogeneous regarding a certain aspect, e.g. competence level, first language, country of origin, age, personal interests, etc.

Annex 3.13.
Diverse classroom

Especially if you are teaching a very diverse group in an informal setting irrespective of any CEFR levels, you will have to define groups of homogeneous competence level and assign appropriate tasks that can be solved with their skill set, in order not to demand too much or too little from single learners.

For other tasks especially when working with a multilingual approach it might serve the learning if a group shares the same first language in order to compare grammatical structures, vocabulary or cultural aspects and to support each other in the specific challenges common to learners with a shared first language.

Some other times it might be especially motivating if learners are grouped according to their interests. For example, some learners will deal with a task on the topic of sports and others on music.

In these particular settings, homogeneous grouping can be exploited to optimize the efficiency of your teaching.

Grouping in heterogenous groups

You can also make use of the diversity in the classroom by setting up heterogeneous groups. Heterogeneity, e.g. in the competence level, country of origin, personal background etc.

Regarding the competence of the learners the different levels can also be an asset. One learner can guide another learner through a task and by that check in on their own knowledge and skills. If this is done sensitively it can provide fertile ground for cooperative learning in the classroom.

For a lot of communicative tasks grouping heterogeneously can help to overcome the simulative setting a lot of lesson activities are confined to. If learners have different cultural backgrounds, different opinions, different experiences, you can work with those communication **gaps** to give opportunity for real exchange between the learners.

Level of difficulty

If you want to work with a group of different skill levels on one task, you also have various options to react to the different requisitions while having them work on the same task.
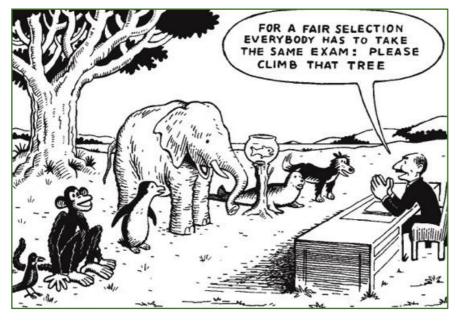
ANNEX 3.14.
Homogenous grouping

ANNEX 3.15.
Heterogenous grouping

Figure 4: Source: Source: https://mathcoachblog.com

You can vary the volume or WORKLOAD of the task by having extra challenges for the stronger learners.

You can have different LEARNING PATHS, for example let stronger learners rehearse a dialogue orally, while weaker learners get the chance to write it down.

You could provide the learners with a variation of ASSISTING MATERIAL, that will satisfy the different needs for support of all learners.

Or you could divide a task in different sections of VARYING COMPLEXITY LEVEL and distribute them according to the learners' abilities.

These tools will allow you to design your lesson in a learner-centred way while still having them work on the same topic or content.

Activation of learners and the teacher's role in an interactive setting
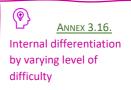
Providing a classroom setting that encourages learners to participate actively has a number of consequences that are beneficial for the learners' success.

- ✓ An interactive classroom allows for everyone to practice communication in the target language.
- ✓ Through active engagement, knowledge is processed more deeply.
- ✓ Active participation fosters cooperation in the classroom which is a motivating factor and a valuable social skill.
- ✓ Interactive classroom settings are student-centred and foster learner autonomy.

So how can you as a teacher make interaction happen?

Student talking time

A common indicator for an interactive classroom is the share of student talking time compared to teacher talking time. The teacher talking in the target language is of course unavoidable in a number of classroom situations: The teacher's role is invaluable in explaining complex matters, clearing up misunderstandings and giving instructions. Often, teacher talk is the most time-saving technique to make sure everyone gets the same input in a clear and structured way. The teacher's

ANNEX 3.16.
Internal differentiation by varying level of difficulty

verbal output is also precious authentic spoken material in the target language for the learners to take in and therefore always a way to train listening comprehension. On the other hand, in many lessons there are also missed opportunities for the learners to speak if the teachers take up too much time talking themselves.

Even in a "teacher talk" part of a lesson there is room for the learners to engage actively. Before giving any explanation regarding grammar or vocabulary, you could ask the learners. Be patient though and give them a while to process the question. This strategy has several benefits. It can give the learners a sense of achievement and empowerment, trains language awareness and even if the answer is not correct you can establish an atmosphere for experimentation, where learners experience that they are allowed to make hypotheses and explore the target language.

ANNEX 3.17.
Increasing student talking time

Threads

Another way to ensure space for the learners' active participation is to minimize teacher instruction time. A helpful tool to make classroom management more effective and therefore leave more time for the learning activities is to use threads. Threads are classroom routines, that the learners get familiar with and will execute over time without the need of any instruction. This could be a specific activity set-up, that can be used in different contexts like *Four corners* (https://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/four-corners) or *Think – pair – share* (https://www.barefootteflteacher.com/blog/what-are-thinking-routines). Or it could be a communicative ritual to start or end your lessons with. In higher levels, this could be short presentations by the learners and with lower levels it could be starting the week with reflecting on the weekend or on a certain lesson-related topic like what learners ate (food) or how they got to the course (transport).
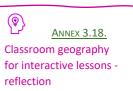
Geography of the classroom

The role of the learning environment has been getting special attention in research in all areas of education in recent years. While Module 2 focused on creating a positive climate for learning, let's have a short look on how the physicality of the classroom can enhance the learning for a more interactive experience.

As we aiming to create a communicative interactive classroom setting, we need to examine the infrastructure in that light. Often tables and chairs are set up in rows directed at the teacher who forms a focal point with the white board, smart board or projection screen. In many situations this can be suitable to allow every learner to have an unobstructed view on the teacher's instructions. But there are other indicators, that should be considered, when arranging the learning environment:

ANNEX 3.18.
Classroom geography for interactive lessons - reflection

- ✓ How easy is interaction between learners? How well can students see each other, see each other's reactions and communicate with each other? Do the lines of sight in the space allow the students to feel as part of a cooperating group?
- ✓ How easy is it for a teacher to work with different interaction patterns? How flexible is the classroom infrastructure to adapt to pair work, group work or games that require moving through the whole classroom?

- ✓ Is there also space for the students to process knowledge individually in a focused way?
- ✓ Are there opportunities for learners to interact with the space and to become involved creatively?

Not all classrooms may allow for such massive flexibility. Especially, if the classrooms are too small, changing up the setting for certain activities is complicated and takes a lot of time. All the more a smart classroom geography is necessary.

Some tips for quick changes to make the space more flexible:

- ✓ Arrange the tables in a U-shape instead of in rows. The learners can interact and see each other, but also the top of the room, where instructions often are given. If you do a lot of group work, clustering tables might also suit your lesson more than rows.
- ✓ Leave some free space where it is easy to move around for game activities, role plays or carousel activities and interviews.
- ✓ Use the four walls of the classroom as active learning space. You can hang sheets of paper for groups to develop brainstorms, mind maps etc. and you can later hang the results. Or you can generate posters featuring training topics with the learners and hang them.
- ✓ You can also use the wall space for interactive interventions. Give the learners space to collect learning objectives they are interested in or even collect learning tips for their peers like links for helpful websites, podcasts or YouTube videos.

ANNEX 3.19.
Classroom geography for interactive lessons - transformation

Working with a variety of tasks and social forms to keep learners engaged

Especially if you give intensive courses over several hours a day and several days a week, it is worthwhile considering how to mix up the classroom activities. Even with adult learners, monotonous lessons that move at the same pace will be exhausting for learners and teacher alike.

It is therefore helpful to think about how you stage your teaching session and to try to include different paces, stimuli and work forms. A too often neglected factor, that can support learning effectively is movement. And this is not restricted to children, it also applies to adult learners:

- ✓ Physical activity enhances attention and kills boredom.
- ✓ Brain breaks can help to process the freshly acquired knowledge or skills and can help the brain organize itself.
- ✓ Physical movement activates our episodic and environmental memory.

Another reason for mixing up the staging of your lessons is to serve all learning preferences. Providing a great variety of classroom activities and study material will contribute to taking all learners along.

There are many parameters, that can be played with in order to find a good, varied rhythm for your lessons. Try the following:

Vary interaction patterns

Choose interaction patterns purposefully. What kind of setting serves the nature of the activity best: working in plenary, groups, pairs or individually? All settings are eligible for certain lesson activities, so switch between the activities to allow for different kind of interaction and optimize the activity's efficiency.

Vary activities and tasks

Even if you work with a course book, the tasks do not necessarily have to be solved individually sitting at a desk with a pen in the hand. Of course, you can vary the interaction patterns as mentioned above, but you can also change up the form of the activity itself. You can include movement, e.g. with a carousel activity, role plays, provide haptic material for the students to move around and bring in the right order, visuals that support the understanding, set the task up as a game or simply have different learning stations where learners move from task to task.

ANNEX 3.20.
Learner activation

Balance off all fields of competencies

Make sure all competencies are trained in your lessons. Give space for the receptive competencies of listening and reading and support their understanding through preparatory techniques. Also give opportunity for the productive competencies of writing and speaking and give time to prepare the learners for those. To facilitate the training of all competencies equally, you can think about what needs to be done face-to-face and what can be done as homework. But even if you outsource reading and writing into the homework, give the learners tools and strategies to prepare for those tasks in the face-to-face lessons. For more info about preparing for the competencies, look at the links.

Vary material and include authentic content

Some material you find in course books can feel constructed or unauthentic to the learners. The material is designed especially for their skill level and therefore less complex, but also less relatable than authentic content. This simplification is often necessary to challenge the learners step by step and give them the confidence to achieve progress. Nonetheless, your learners benefit if you complement the course book with authentic content in your lessons.

ANNEX 3.21.
Including authentic content as learning material

You can include real maps, timetables, brochures, newspaper scraps, flyers, advertising posters etc. from their everyday world which gives the learners the confidence to cope and interact with their new environment and can even give them orientation. Be careful not to overwhelm them though and provide supporting tools.

Another type of "real world content" that learners will constantly be confronted with in the target language are all kinds of online resources. You can use those at all skill levels like researching opening hours, filling in a form, booking train or cinema tickets or doing research on a specific topic. This can give the learners a strong sense of self-efficacy for their use of the target language outside the classroom.

FURTHER READING

Read more on teaching grammar:

Budden, J. (2021). *Jazzing up grammar*. British Council.
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/jazzing-grammar

Read more on internal differentiation:

Differentiation in the ESOL classroom. https://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/teachers/staff-room/teaching-articles/differentiation-esol-classroom

Read more on student talk time:

https://www.cune.edu/academics/resource-articles/chatting-it-how-increase-student-talk-time-esl-classroom

Read more on threads:

Dossetor, J. (2021). *Course planning*. British Council.
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/course-planning

Read more on thinking routines:

https://www.barefootteflteacher.com/blog/what-are-thinking-routines

Watch this video on learning environments:

Robinson, Ken (2016). Sir Ken Robinson and learning environments. HundrED.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNYEPsyJdhc

Read more on active learning strategies:

https://teaching.berkeley.edu/active-learning-strategies

Kuczala, M. (2015). The Kinaesthetic Classroom: Teaching and Learning through Movement.
TEDxAshburn. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41gtxgDfY4s

More on preparing the learners for listening:

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/a-framework-planning-a-listening-skills-lesson

Read more on preparing learners for writing:

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/planning-a-writing-lesson

Read more on preparing learners for speaking:

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/reluctant-talkers-1

Read more on task-based learning:

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/making-time-tasks-still-covering-syllabus

Read more on different classroom content:

Weller, D. (2021). *The Four Types of Classroom Context*. The Barefoot TEFL Teacher.
https://www.barefootteflteacher.com/blog/four-types-of-context

Conclusion

Module 3 focused on the importance of planning lessons purposefully by setting meaningful learning objectives for the demands of your specific group of learners. By involving the learners in the process of defining those, your teaching will increase its purpose and the learning in the classroom will improve its efficiency. By being transparent about the process, learners become aware of what they are learning, why they are learning it and also how they are doing. This makes the learning measurable for teachers and learners alike. Through the transparency of learning objectives, teachers can foster learner autonomy, one of the cornerstones of up-to-date language teaching.

This will help the learners to become active language users in their life outside the classroom and help them take agency for their own learning path. An ideal precondition for the learners' activation in the course context is a communicative, cooperative and vibrant learning environment that motivates the learners to fully engage. By including a variety of tasks, social forms, competencies and content the teacher has the means to design interactive lessons that cater to a diverse group of learners.

In order to do this purposefully thorough preparation is necessary. We provided you with a strategy of how to do the preparation work in a systematic way starting from the learning objectives in order to put the learner in the centre every step of the way.

Annex 3.1. Reflection on learning objectives

Take a moment and think about your last teaching session. Identify what was it that learners should have been able to do at the end of the session, that they had not been able to do before?

Your notes

Annex 3.2. Reflection of high-lighted terms and glossary

This activity provides you with in-depth information on the terms highlighted in this module. In the first table you can collect anything that comes to your mind when hearing this term. If you know the concept already, take notes of the key aspects. On the second page we give you a definition to compare it with your findings.

Your notes

Competence Orientation / Skills Orientation	
CEFR – The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	
Learner Autonomy	
The Multilingual Approach	
Deductive Teaching Approach vs. Inductive Teaching Approach	
Communication Gaps	

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Glossary

Competence Orientation / Skills Orientation	**Competence Orientation (Skills Orientation)** has been a key principle of language teaching since the 1970s. It puts the focus on the skills that make the learners capable of acting in the foreign language: receptive skills like listening and reading and productive skills like speaking and writing. Read more: Teflpedia (2021). *Competency-based Language Teaching.* https://teflpedia.com/Competency-based_Language_Teaching
CEFR – **The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**	**CEFR** – the **C**ommon **E**uropean **F**ramework of **R**eference for Languages, first launched in 2001 by the Council of Europe, provides a framework for a transnational comparability of language learners' skill levels. Its classification into six skill levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) is widespread as a tool to grade learners' language competencies. For the above competence levels the CEFR lists can-do-descriptors in all competence areas to make individual learning progress measurable. Find it here: Council of Europe (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion Volume. Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg. https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4
Learner Autonomy	Lessons that follow the principle of **Learner Autonomy** support the learners in reflecting upon their own learning process. By self-reflection the learners gain control and take charge of what and how they want to learn. It also enables them to learn independently and take the learning out of the classroom and into their individual life situation.
The Multilingual Approach	**The Multilingual Approach** aims to draw upon the multilingual knowledge and expertise that students bring into the classroom. Incorporating the learners language experiences fosters self-reflexive learning and also gives validation to and builds upon the skills they already have and thereby engages learners. For a resource on multilingual approaches, that provides theory, but also activities for the multilingual classroom check out: Heugh, K. et al. (2019). *Using multilingual approaches: moving from theory to practice*. British Council. https://issuu.com/britishcouncilindia/docs/using_multilingual_approaches_resource_book
Deductive Teaching Approach vs. Inductive Teaching Approach	The **Deductive Teaching Approach** is teacher-centred. Patterns and structures of the target language are explained explicitly by the teacher and subsequently trained by the learners according to the presented rules. The **Inductive Teaching Approach** is centred around the learners. The teacher confronts the learners with a phenomenon and encourages them to reflect on the systematics and rules themselves. This engages learners and enhances learner autonomy, critical thinking and fosters a deeper understanding of the language system. For more on this read: https://www.tefl.com.mx/inductive-and-deductive/
Communication Gaps	In a communicative language learning approach, **Gaps** can provide authentic reason to communicate between learners and thereby increase motivation and student talking time. Gaps could be discrepancies in experiences, knowledge, opinions etc. Read more on gaps: Rees, G. (2021). *Find the gap – increasing speaking in class*. British Council. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/find-gap-increasing-speaking-class

Which of the following learning objectives are action-oriented and related to learners' life outside of the classroom?

Content

Learners can complete the tasks in the book correctly.
Learners can express in simple words that they do not know the correct term in the target language.
Learners can explain how to form comparative and superlative adjectives.
Learners can ask conversation partners for the reasons for their behaviour or attitudes.
Learners can ask friends or colleagues if they want to join them for an activity.
Learners can fill-in official forms with their personal information.
Learners can call-in sick at work.
Learners know the past tense forms of the irregular verbs.
Learners can withdraw important information from medication package inserts.

Annex 3.4. Measurable Progress

> With this activity you can train to make progress measurable for teachers and learners through setting action-oriented learning objectives.

Content

Choose one of the learning objectives in the table below and think about a specific task, that corresponds to the skill trained. Think of a scenario, that is relevant for your group of learners and draft an activity around this. Assume that the partial functional skills that are needed (necessary vocabulary, grammar, pragmatic considerations) have already been established and trained in the lesson.

What you will do

This unit is about meeting people. These are the skills you will practise.
Which are the most useful for you? Tick the boxes.

Listening and speaking

	Skill	Skill code
☐	Talk about people's lives and things they did in the past	Lr/E2.2a, 2b, 2c, 2d; Sc/E2.2c, 2d, 3a, 3b
☐	Meet and greet people	Lr/E2.1d, 6b; Sd/E2.1a; Sc/E2.1a
☐	Apologise and give reasons	Sc/E2.3d
☐	Describe people	Sc/E2.2f, 3f

Reading and writing

	Skill	Skill code
☐	Write about things that happened in the past	Ww/E2.1b; Rw/E2.3a, 4a
☐	Write about people and their lives	Wt/E2.1a; Ws/E2.1a
☐	Read texts about people and their lives	Rw/E2.2a, 1b; Rt/E2.1a, 4a; Rs/E2.1b

1 Education and Training foundation (2021). ESOL Learner Materials, Entry 2, Unit 2.
https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf700

Example:

Skill: Apologise and give reasons

Task for your learners: Group up in pairs. One of you is the language teacher and the other one is a student, who comes too late to class. Have a dialogue starting with the student apologizing. After completion take turns.

Annex 3.5. Types of learning objectives

With this activity you can practice differentiating between different types of learning objectives. This helps you to design action-oriented lessons which allow learners to evolve in all competence areas.

Content

Read the learning objectives below and sort them into the categories KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS and ATTITUDE.

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDE
Learners can name all modal verbs			
Learners can identify all letters			
Learners can ask the teacher to repeat a question.			
Learners can reflect on their motivation for learning the target language.			
Learners can report what they did on the weekend.			
Learners can name the most important holidays in the target country.			
Learners know the names of the most important food items.			
Learners can adapt the learning process to their learning preferences.			
Learners can address staff in a shop appropriately.			
Learners can ask their vis-à-vis who they are and where they come from.			
Learners know in what context a person has to be addressed formally or informally			

Annex 3.6. Learner-centred learning objectives

Taking your learners' perspective is crucial to design learner-centered lessons. This activity challenges you to find learning objectives relevant for your group of learners.

Content

Think of a group of your learners. Which broad action-oriented learning objectives can span over a teaching session and result in a communicative situation, your learners might be confronted with in their real life?

List your ideas:

Annex 3.7. Involving learners in setting learning objectives

Involving learners in the process of defining learning objectives is important if you want to foster learner autonomy. This activity animates you to think of ways of how to accomplish their involvement.

Content

Think about your group of learners. Reflect on how willing they are to share their personal motives for learning the language.

Can you think of playful ways to start an exchange about that in the classroom setting?

Annex 3.8. Considering learners' starting point

This activity animates you to reflect thoroughly on your learners' starting point when designing lesson activities.

Content

Look back at your list you drew up in activity 6 with learning objectives suited to your group of learners. What learning objective did you list for your learners? Consider which knowledge and skills your learners need to accomplish this task. Look at the following figure and consider what partial knowledge of the language system, cultural knowledge and skills your learners already have and what need to be trained in each competence area.

List them for each competence area:

Annex 3.9. Considering your learners' linguistic precondition

This activity will stimulate appreciation of your learners' linguistic precondition for learning the language and sensitize you for the particular challenges of the individual learners.

Content

Think of one of your learners and do some research on their first language. You can do that by reading the Wikipedia article about the language or by interviewing a person who speaks that language. What aspects of the language you teach will be particularly challenging for this learner, regarding the linguistic areas of vocabulary, grammar, spelling or phonetics?

VOCABULARY	SPELLING
GRAMMAR	**PHONETICS**

Annex 3.10. Engage – Study – Activate: Sequencing learning activities

Organizing your lessons depends a lot on finding the right dynamic for your planned learning activities. This activity will help you practice an *Engage – Study – Activate* routine.

Content

Think back to activity 3.6 and 3.8 and think of the learning steps, that will lead the learners to the lesson's objective. Bring those in an order that allows the learners to succeed. Which activities will lead best to achieving these learning steps? Apply the Engage – Study – Activate teaching method to prepare a well-planned lesson.

Annex 3.11. Teaching activities: Finding the teacher's role

> As a teacher you can enhance the learners' success by supporting them every step of the way. Depending on the different aspects of your lessons, this can be achieved through the teacher's behavior and actions in the classroom.

Content

By what behaviour and actions can you as a teacher achieve to ...

... motivate the learners?

... support the learners individually?

... observe the learners' progress?

... involve the learners?

... support the learners' reflection on their own language learning?

Annex 3.12. Design your own lesson plan

Design your own lesson plan. Use the template provided in the module and use your findings of activity 3.6., 3.8., and 3.10. to complete the template.

Content

Take into account all your previous considerations and design a lesson plan using the template based on the learning objective for your learners. Use the template on the next page.

Course:

Learning Objective:

Time	Learning Step	Learning Activity	Interaction pattern	Material and Media	Teaching Activity

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SAMPLE

Course: A2

Learning Objective: *Learners can visit a doctor*

Time	Learning Step	Learning Activity	Interaction Pattern	Material and Media	Teaching Activity
Write down how much time, you think you will need for that activity. That way you can keep track, if you are in time with what you planned.	*Write down the single steps of your lesson, meaning each activity, that you plan to do.*	*Write down, what the learners are meant to do exactly during this activity.*	*Write down, if you plan to conduct this activity with the whole class, individual work, partner work, group work etc.*	*What things will you need to implement the activity? Copies, Audio, Video, Whiteboard etc.?*	*Write down, what you as a teacher intend to do during the activity, e.g. introducing the task, monitoring, preparing the next activity etc.*
9.00 – 9.05	Introducing learning objective and sparking interest	Learners speculate on topic of the lesson	Classroom talk	Photograph of doctor's practice	Teacher asks learners to describe what they see on photograph and animates them to speculate on the day's learning objective.
9.05 – 9.20	Activation of previous knowledge / recap of vocabulary of body parts, diseases and illnesses	Brainstorm on poster with outlines of body, writing down known terms	All class together	Whiteboard or poster, pens	Pointing on body parts, asking for previous knowledge, asking learners to write vocabulary on poster, correct if necessary.
9.20 – 9.40	Training of above terms	Dialogue Game with cards "Aren't you feeling well?": Learners get cards with diseases and walk around in the classroom. When they meet somebody, they have to interrogate each other on their disease/illness. Then they swap cards.	Classroom stroll (individual learners walking around in the classroom)	Cards with diseases	Explain rules, observe and correct if necessary. In case some terms are difficult, explain afterwards to everyone and write them down again.
9.40 – 10.10	Getting to know useful phrases for seeing a doctor.	Learners listen to audio with dialogue several times and bring cut out dialogue parts in right order. Afterwards they compare with their neighbour.	Individual work and working in pairs.	- Audio - Cut out dialogue parts for each learner	Teacher plays audio. Asks questions to clear context. In the end comparing right order and clear up meaning of phrases, if there are insecurities.
...	...	...	...	...	...

Annex 3.14. Homogenous grouping

> When designing lesson activities for a diverse group of learners, it can make sense to distribute group work to homogenous groups.

Content

Grouping homogenously means to put learners together in a work group that share some kind of characteristic. They could be of a similar age, be in the same competence level, share the same first language, the same country of origin, age or personal interests.

Pick one of the above-mentioned aspects and think about a scenario where a homogenous grouping would be expedient.

Take notes:

Annex 3.15. Heterogenous grouping

In another context it might prove useful to group people heterogeneously and this way making most of the diversity in the classroom.

Content

Pick one of the mentioned aspects (competence level, country of origin, personal background) and think about a scenario where you would choose a heterogeneous grouping.

Take notes:

Annex 3.16. Internal differentiation by varying level of difficulty

> If you want learners to work together on one task despite a varied skill level beyond the learners, you have various tools for internal differentiation at hand.

Content

Think of an informal classroom setting with mixed-ability learners. Choose one of the following tasks and think through what differentiation tools you could apply to address different learners needs, abilities and interests.

- Organize a birthday party
- Plan a class trip / excursion

Annex 3.17. Increasing student talking time

The share of student talking time vs. teacher talking time is a valuable indicator for how interactive your classroom is. This activity supports you to reflect on how you could increase student talking time.

Content

What communicative activities that you usually take over as a teacher in the classroom could be performed by the learners?

List them here and try it out in the classroom:

Annex 3.18. Classroom Geography for interactive lessons - reflection

By changing the actual infrastructure in your classroom, you can improve interactivity and encourage learners for active participation. Assess your current teaching environment in that light.

Content

Make a sketch of your own classroom setting in the form of a map. Note down elements in the classroom that are used for the lessons like tables, chairs, whiteboards, posters, screens etc. Then include the learners and you as a teacher ask yourself: What common positions do you take in the role of the teacher? What is the learners' radius of movement? Lastly draw arrows, that indicate what kind of communication, and between whom, takes place in the classroom.

Annex 3.19. Classroom Geography for interactive lessons - transformation

After having reflected on your actual teaching environment in the previous activity, now it's time to think about changes that could improve interactivity in the classroom.

Content

Look at your sketch again and check it with the mentioned indicators. If you think, your current classroom setting can be improved make a new sketch, where this is considered.

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Annex 3.20. Learner activation

> Monotonous teaching is not only boring for teachers and learners, but also less effective. Providing a variety of tasks, activities and social forms will stimulate students and help them process the input.

Content

Look at the task in the example. How could you have the learners execute the task to activate them?

Activity B ● Words for describing people

1 These words and phrases are useful for describing people. Check the meaning of the words you don't know in your dictionary. Then put them in the correct part of the table.

Personality	Age	Size	Hair	Other information
nice funny	about 50	tall	grey	beard

> bald   brown   slim   fair   in her 30s   helpful   in his early 60s
In his late 20s   kind   lively   blond   long   moustache
short (×2)   dark   small   quiet   serious   wears glasses

2 Add any other words you know.

Education and Training foundation (2021). ESOL Learner Materials, Entry 2, Unit 2.
https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf700

Annex 3.21. Incorporating authentic content as learning material

To make the learning content more exciting, teachers can incorporate authentic material. This "real world content" could be maps, timetables, leaflets, newspaper scraps, posters or all kind of online content.

Content

Think about your learners. What authentic material could be used in the lessons that is relevant to them? Choose a source and develop ideas about how to structure a session around that material.