

2026 Idiom Vol 62 No 1 – Call for contributions

Lesson planning: The teacher as expert and learner

Theme

No one denies the value of a well-designed lesson. Without careful curation, the experience of the classroom can be fragmented, confusing, busy without purpose.

Lesson planning involves the ongoing development of capacities that go beyond organisational thinking and preparation. As English teachers move through their careers and gain more experience, they develop a keen sense of how a plan will enable learning for diverse students; how things can unfold so that there is exploration, meaning, and clarity; how lessons build upon what's been done prior and link to where the learning is heading. A single lesson plan is part of a map; a personalised map that says something about the curator as well as the students and their community.

Lesson planning combined with being responsive to learning opportunities as they arise requires expertise and is central to the nature of effective teaching. These complex capacities are refined over time through opportunities for critical reflection on practice (Loughran, 2010). A recent international study (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), focused on the features of high-performing systems around the world, found that opportunities for collaborative, contextualised curriculum planning and approaches like Lesson Study support teachers to think through their reasoning and are central to highly effective teaching and learning.

Lesson planning is currently in the spotlight (see the [Victorian Lesson Plans](#) and the [AERO Practice Guide](#)) and it is a good time to ask why. Sequences of endorsed English lessons are now provided by the Victorian Department of Education. They align with the new Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (VTLM 2.0) and, for this reason, there is pressure in some schools to use them. Supplying teachers with externally prepared lesson plans can also be understood as a response to unmanageable workloads in schools and to the perception by teachers that there is limited support from schools and systems ([Longmuir et al., 2022](#)). Providing English teachers with script-like lesson plans can also be seen as a reaction to the urgent shortage of English teachers in this state where there are increasing levels of out-of-field teaching (Hobbs et al. 2022).

Externally produced lesson plans are also widely available on the internet and produced through AI. While US [research has found](#) that AI-generated lesson plans are uninspiring, traditional and fail to promote critical thinking, challenging workforce conditions can mean that teachers have little choice but to rely on such resources.

It is timely for us to investigate our practices in relation to lesson planning, to examine systemic expectations, to highlight the tensions we experience, and to unpack the approaches that enable success.

We invite your contributions to this edition of Idiom

Following are the sorts of questions you might like to explore, focusing on lesson planning for the secondary English classroom. Please use them as prompts or starting points.

- What capacities and knowledge are required for good lesson planning in English?
 - How have you developed your ability to plan over time, through what sort of experiences?
 - What role does technology play in your lesson planning? Does it support, enable or inhibit good planning?
 - Do you feel equipped to plan good English lessons? Why? What support do you require?
- Is/should lesson planning be a creative act?
 - What is the process of planning for you? What are the stages you go through?
 - What are the qualities of a creative plan?
 - Where is the space for spontaneity, humour and responsiveness in planning? Can a plan be too constraining?
- How is the experience of planning linked to professional identity and autonomy?
 - How is planning linked to what you enjoy about being an English teacher?
 - How is your planning informed by knowing your students and their community well?
 - How autonomous should an English teacher be?
- How are you using externally prepared lesson plans?
 - What's been your experience of using them and what impact are they having on your teaching?
- What does an effective lesson plan look like?
 - Are there phases of learning embedded in a good plan? If so, what are those phases?
 - How much detail does a good plan need to have?
 - What use are scripted plans to you?
 - Is a plan a personal or public document?
- What are the conditions required for good lesson planning?
 - How much time is devoted to planning?
 - Is the work required sustainable?
 - Is collaboration with peers essential to the planning process?
- What impact do lesson plans have on students' learning?
 - What is the impact of careful and deliberate planning on students' learning in English and their wellbeing?

We want to hear from you

We are keen for members to share their approaches, thoughts, research and experiences. You can write reflectively, creatively or aim to share information and useful resources with peers. The following ideas aim to get you thinking about different ways to structure your contribution:

- An inquiry you've conducted into your practice of lesson planning.
- An 'excellent' lesson with annotations where you highlight the lesson's qualities in comments or speech bubbles.
- A poem that captures the planning process.

- A cartoon that offers critique.
- An investigation into your faculty's various approaches to lesson planning.
- A personal reflection on the use of English lesson plans prepared externally or produced through AI.
- A letter to the Minister of Education where you express a viewpoint.
- Diary entries or slices of life that capture your planning experiences over time.
- An artistic representation of your experience with an accompanying explanation.
- An interview you've conducted with an early career teacher about their planning experiences.

The possibilities are endless.

Dates for submission

Full submissions (1000-2500 words) are **due Monday 16 February 2026** to: idiom@vate.org.au.

General advice about writing and formatting your article for Idiom is available [here](#).

References

Darling-Hammond, L., Burns, D., Campbell, C., Goodwin, A. L., Hammerness, K., Low, E., McIntyre, A., Sato, M., & Zeichner, K. (2017). *Empowered educators: How high-performing systems shape teaching quality around the world*. Jossey-Bass.

Hobbs L., Du Plessis A., Oates G., Caldis S., McKnight L., Vale C., O'Connor M., Rochette E., Watt H., Weldon P., Richardson P., & Bareup C. (2022). *Australian National Summit on Teaching out-of-field: Synthesis and recommendations for policy, practice and research*. Deakin University.

Loughran, J. (2010). *What expert teachers do: Enhancing professional knowledge for classroom practice*. Routledge.

Longmuir, F., Gallo Cordoba, B., Phillips, M., Allen, K.A. & Moharami, M. (2022). *Australian Teachers' Perceptions of their Work in 2022*. Monash University.
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