

# Lesson Plan and Analysis of One Cambridge English Course: “Trends”

Danyu Wang

University of Liverpool, Liverpool, the UK

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**Abstract:** The aim of this essay is to analyze and design a teaching plan based on a reading course (level B1) in a textbook. The lesson lasts 60 minutes and involves teenagers with Chinese as their mother tongue who are learning English. The number of participants in this course is 8. Through the analysis of the characteristics of the participants, and the comparison of PPP model (Presentation, Practice, Production) and TBLT model (Task-based language teaching), the latter is chosen for this teaching plan. In addition, this essay provides a rationale for the teaching plan.

**Keywords:** PPP model, TBLT model, Teaching plan.

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## 1. Introduction

The lesson plan is important to both the student and the teacher. In a successful foreign language class, teachers need to consider teaching context, syllabus and curriculum, the level of students, the materials and technology available, teaching methods, the coursebook (Harmer, 2015, pp. 211-213). Harmer (2015) proposed that planning helps teachers decide what to do next in class. Students can also learn about the teacher's careful consideration through the lesson plan and trust the teacher (p. 210). He also emphasized that while designing the curriculum, teachers can think about the order of each stage in the classroom so that they can end a class smoothly through the final summary, or calm the excited students in the activity (p. 214).

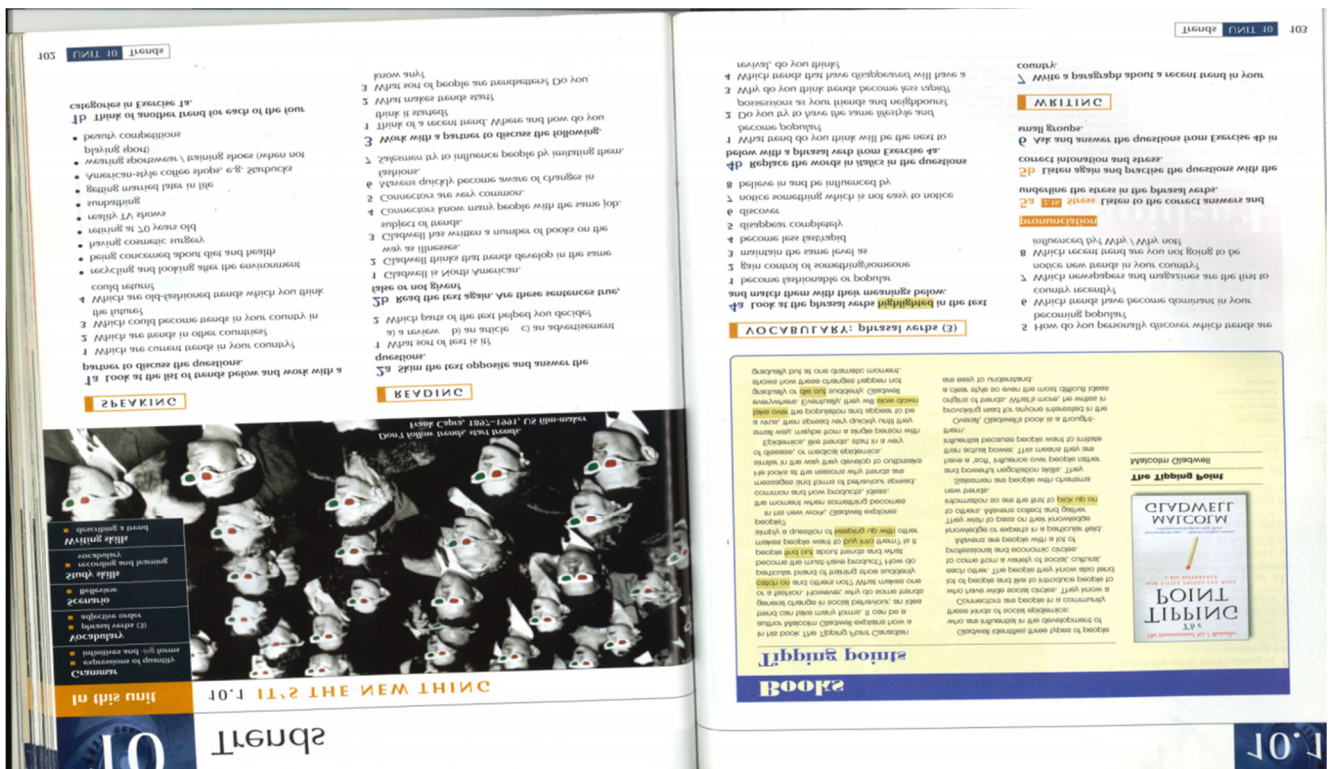
This course is based on reading an essay and explores a topic in our daily life: trends. The course lasts 60 minutes, which is normal. The participants of the class are teenagers whose mother tongue is Chinese and who are learning English. Their CEFR is B1. The number of students participating in the class is 8. Scrivener (2011) points out that adolescents have strong motivations for things that affect them, and they will have a strong interest in things or topics that are related to them. But once they feel that they are being forced to do something, the chance of motivation becomes very low (p. 325). Therefore, based on the characteristics of the students, and a simple comparison of the PPP model and the TBLT model, the latter is chosen in this reading class. This essay provides rationale for the lesson plan, which explains the reasons for arranging each activity in the course. Finally, in this lesson, students are supposed to speak more confidently and fluently in the activity; learn how to read effectively through skimming and scanning and intensive reading; understand and master the phrasal verbs and learn to use them in spoken and writing context; master the correct pronunciation of these new phrasal verbs.

## 2. Analysis

This lesson takes TBLT model, based on tasks, to enable

students to acquire the target language during communication process. Willis (1996) points out “the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model, which focused on accurate use of the grammatical forms thought at the Presentation stage”, but few students who accept this kind of model in class can use English to communicate with others frequently. Compared with PPP model, task-based language teaching (TBLT) which developed from communicative language teaching, pays more attention to communication including form. The process of TBLT provides more learning opportunities for learners and gives experience of language in use before studying language in detail.

David Nunan (2004) argues that the principle of TBLT model should involve: an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language; the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation; an enhancement of the learning's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning, etc. (p. 1). These features help promote motivation of student. According to Jeremy Harmer (2015), he sums up the factors that influenced the motivation: student's peers, natural curiosity, previous learning experiences, etc. (pp. 89-91). Therefore, motivation can be roused efficiently through TBLT model. In this teaching model, the teacher should first act as a guide or a task-setter rather than a controller. In other words, one of the teacher's roles is the enabler. This role is different with traditional teaching one. Compared to transmitting knowledge, the teacher in class may become a guide or a counselor or a resource of information when needed (Scrivener, 2011, p. 18). Willis (2012) mentions, firstly, the teacher needs to assign tasks and introduce the subject matter of the tasks. Secondly, students need to program in groups while the teacher monitors from a distance and records them. Finally, the teacher gives summary about the language and feedback (summarized in Harmer, 2015, p. 61). In this case, the teacher may greatly promote the frequency of communication between learners.



### 3. Pre-reading

At the beginning of the class, the pre-reading stage, the teacher needs to go to exercise 1a and 1b. First show the list in 1a with relevant pictures in slides, such as pictures about TV show, sunbathing, wedding, bikini, etc. And have students discuss these questions in groups, with their own words, which aims to introduce the background and topic of this lesson, and to arouse students' interest in the text (Watkins, 2005, p. 110). What's more, Scrivener (2011, p. 40) argues that "lead-in stage may be to help raise motivation." This is also called top-down processing, which means students have a general view about the text through a series of lead-in activities. "This is greatly helped if their schema allows them to have appropriate expectations of what they are going to come across" (Harmer, 2015, p. 302). At this stage, it is also called the pre-task stage. The teacher introduces topics and highlights some important vocabulary to help students understand the next tasks (Harmer, 2015, p. 61). The reason why adopt group work is that maximize student talking time and minimize the danger that teacher talking time will dominate (Harmer, 2015, p. 181). Besides, the teacher asks students about some of these questions and give online correction (if students make mistakes). For example, the teacher asked: which could become trends in your country in the future? The student answered: i think retire at 70 years old could become the trend. Then the teacher would use emoticons or repeat the student's answer: retire (puzzled expression)? Student: retiring. The teacher: yes! Say it again. The student: i think retiring at 70 years old could be the trend. The teacher: yes, good! I agree. The teacher offers "gentle correction" during fluently work, which means teacher may help the students to understand what is going wrong or prompt them to say something better (Harmer, 2015, p. 157). Teachers, classroom atmosphere, lesson content and peers are important factors that influence motivation (Harmer, 2015, p. 91), and these factors can be felt immediately by students in

pre-reading stage. Besides, rapport is an important element of a good class. According to Scrivener (2011), "rapport is the way the teacher related to the learners, and consequently how learners related to each other" (p. 15). Activities can facilitate the interaction between them. For example, when students are discussing trends in their eyes, one classmate talks that Starbucks coffee will become more and more popular with young people, and another classmate happens to be a coffee lover, so the classroom atmosphere will gradually become more friendly. In addition, the teacher interviewed students' views on trends in the form of questions and gave some feedback, which also increased the distance between teachers and students. Therefore, the existence this stage is extremely significant. The next task also requires students to spend a lot of time to discuss, so the discussion time of activities 1a, 1b does not need to be too long.

The teacher then should pay attention to some new lexis, which is highlighted in the reading materials in this lesson. The teacher needs to make students know these new words in advance so that students can focus on the text easily (Watkins, 2005, p. 110). According to Scrivener (2011), "pre-teaching can help students to recall items they already know as much as introducing new items. The main aim is to help ensure that the following activity will work" (p.194). First, the teacher lists the important lexis which puzzles students through presentation software. Collect a lot of good images, animations or even videos previously and then present them in class, which can promote learning (Harmer, 2015, p. 259). Scrivener (2011) argues that such a tool has become an important way of organizing, storing, and showing learning content and making a show with only pictures is a great way of teaching lexis. (pp. 337-338). During the process of vocabulary teaching, the teacher needs to face all the students so that the teacher can measure the mood of the class. And it is more cost-efficient to give explanations and instructions (Harmer, 2015, p. 177).

## 4. While-reading

In this section, the reading process is divided into three stages: skimming, scanning and intensive reading. "Motivation is of great importance when reading", finding answers with questions or finding specific information while reading can stimulate students' motivation (Grellet, 2005, p. 18). Grellet (2005) points out that "students will never read efficiently unless they can adapt their reading speed and technique to their aim when reading" (p.17). In reading class, first, teachers need to enable student to improve reading speed and make them know how to read effectively. Obviously, activities of skimming and scanning are designed to increase reading speeds (Harmer, 2001, p. 265). And he explains that skimming means reading quickly without reading every word to get the gist of a passage, such as discover key topics, main ideas, overall theme, etc. (p. 265). In Activity 2a, firstly, the teacher asks the students to skim the article and answer two questions from the teacher, i.e., what sort of text is it? Which parts of the text helped you decide? Then the students compare the answers with their peers. During the process of skimming with questions, students can attain the gist of text so that they have a clearer aim of this reading context. The reason why students compared with peers is that students need to give reasons for their answers, which means there are more opportunities for communication while they discuss their views, which improve their L2 competence. Finally, the teacher checks answers to ensure answers are correct and ensure everyone has a correct understanding of the gist.

Different from skimming, scanning means move eyes quickly over the text to locate a specific piece of information. For example, students find a name, address, fact, or judge the information right or wrong. This does not require reading the whole text (Harmer, 2001, p. 265). The students are asked to solve specific problems, which is only possible by means of scanning (Grellet, 2005, p. 19). At the beginning of activity 2b, the teacher gives out seven questions about text to the whole class and check students understand questions, which create a reason to read again and find detailed stuff (Watkins, 2005, p.110). After that, students read text again and find answers separately and finally the teacher checks answers and gives the correct one. As pre-reading activity, skimming and scanning are both part of top-down skills. Although scanning is involved with finding individual points, from the text without reading carefully, learners can focus on the overall shape and structure of the text through that. Through the two readings led by the teacher, students can efficiently grasp the important information of the article.

The last phase of while-reading is intensive reading, i.e., reading for details. Students should read the text closely and carefully with intention of gaining an understanding of as much detail as possible, and the question that require students' attention are comprehensive (Harmer, 2001, p. 264). Intensive reading is more difficult and takes more time, while students already have a certain degree of understanding about the text through finishing the previous activities, so it will not be very difficult for them during this part. In activity 3, students are supposed to read the text intensively and discuss with peers to find out the relevant answers. The considerable advantages of talking with peers is that, firstly, it dramatically increases the amount of speaking time any students gets in the class; secondly, it allows students to interact independently without the necessary guidance of the teacher so that it can promote learner independence; besides, such a pattern facilitate the

cooperation and helps the classroom to be a more relaxed and friendly place. At each stage where reading (skimming, scanning, intensive reading) is required, however, the teacher needs to arrange for the students to complete the task separately. The benefits of working on their own is that, firstly, less stressful than performing in a whole-class setting or talking in pairs or groups; secondly, it can develop learner autonomy and promote skill of self-reliance which means students just need to pay attention to the text rather than being disturbing by interaction; thirdly, it can be a way of restoring peace and tranquility (Harmer, 2015, p.180-181). All of these give good reasons for students to focus on reading itself and developing reading skills. Consequently, in the reading session, the teacher must ensure that the students focus on what they are reading. Participating in discussions with peers after finding their own answers is a more efficient choice.

## 5. Post-reading

Since the 1980s, the trend of reading from a perspective of communication has been evident (Paran, 2012, p.454). During the process of reading lesson, teachers should pay attention to how to apply the content of reading text to foreign language communication in real life. Therefore, the activities of post-reading is crucial. After reading, the teacher needs to pay attention to the meaning of target language, i.e. the meaning of phrasal verbs. The teacher presents the definitions of phrasal verbs in 4a, which are out of order, using re-phrasing and matching to make students learning phrasal verbs. "Phrasal verbs are another instance of the fuzziness at the boundary between words and grammar" (Thornbury, 2002, p. 123). He points out the typical exercise types: re-phrasing and matching, as methods for teaching meaning of phrasal verbs are recommendable. And he argues that the exercise without complex explanation can conduct a successful vocabulary learning. "A looser and more natural relationship may be more effective" (Thornbury, 2002, p. 124). That is why the teacher adopts re-phrasing and matching exercises based on text to teach phrasal verbs. Besides, Scrivener (2011) proposes that one strategy is teachers can teach vocabulary by using short stories or other texts that contain separate items, which can make them clear and memorable (p. 196). Before this, students had read the text three times, which promoted their understanding and mastery of vocabulary.

Next, the teacher leads the whole class to enter to activity 4b. Firstly, the teacher divides the students into two groups (four students in each group), and then distributes the eight questions in part 4b to the two groups in the form of questionnaire. Team members need to replace the italicized words in the question with the phrasal verbs that appear in the article. Then, the teacher exchanged group members and asked the two groups to share their answers. After sharing the answers and quick correcting, the teacher led the students to listen to the audio twice. The first time to find out the stress of the phrasal verbs, and the second time to practice the problems in the audio with the correct intonation and stress. Secondly, move on to Activity 6, maintaining the original two groups. The group members need to use the questionnaire issued by the teacher before, and use the questions in the questionnaire to discuss and record with the group members. Students should take the record about the answers for cross-group sharing, and record the answers shared by the other group after the discussion among the members is over. During the whole activity, the teacher observed the activities of the two groups and recorded the form mistakes of phrasal verbs

made by the students in the communication. And provide them with necessary help during the observation. The lexis work after the while-reading stage usually encourages learners to try using the items themselves (Scrivener, 2011, p. 197). The reason why focus on activity 5a and 5b is that raise the students' consciousness of the power of intonation and encourage them to alter their own speech, and it is beneficial for them to listen more carefully to understand the content of messages (Harmer, 2015, p. 290). From activity 4b to activity 6 all belong to "the task cycle stage" in task-based language teaching model (Harmer, 2015, p. 61). According to Willis TBL framework, during this phase, students need to divide into groups and discuss a task together. They should present their work to the rest of the students in the class, making relevant records, and compare notes with others (summarized by Harmer, 2015, p. 61). Scrivener (2011) argues that make students carry through meaning-related tasks brings benefits to language processing and provide them chances for speaking out language (p. 62). Nunan (2004) presents that the crucial base of task-based language teaching is experiential learning, which means the learner's immediate personal experience is the starting point for learning experience. And this teaching mode requires the active participation of students, called "learning by doing", which is in contrast to traditional "transmission" approach (p. 12). All the questions in the questionnaire are meaningful questions close to real life. Students collaborate between groups to complete the questionnaire, and share their views across groups using whatever language they already have and note these views. Such a process stimulates their natural desire to improve their language skills (Nunan, 2004, p. 14). In addition, in the process of group communication, some slips or errors of the students can be corrected by their peers (Scrivener, 2011, p. 158). The teacher's function in activities is to guide the activities and give online corrections or note for offline corrections, as well as give help so that the group activities can proceed smoothly. For example, during the observation process, the teacher finds that students generally mispronounce a certain phrasal verb, or use the wrong type of phrasal verb, such as "die it out", then the teacher can write it down and make corrections after the task is over. In the task, students may have many oral errors in foreign language communication, but the teacher does not need to write down all of them, just record the errors related to the focus of this lesson. Or when students discuss "which newspapers and magazines are the first to notice new trends in your country", if students are not familiar with such topics, the teacher can make suggestions about the type of newspaper and magazine to inspire them. "It seems sensible to choose the ones that are either related to the language point the students are supposed to be working on, or that make the communication unsuccessful" (Scrivener, 2011, p. 157). When the accuracy is concerned, the teacher can choose online correction, and if the fluency is concerned, the teacher can choose offline correction. It depends on the performance of the students in the activity.

## 6. Class Review

After the task, the teacher analyzes the form of phrasal verbs, i.e. four types of phrasal verb: intransitive; transitive inseparable; transitive separable; three-part. And displays the offline correction recorded in the task. Then, the teacher distributes the cards to enter Activity 7. Students need to write a paragraph on the cards about recent trends in their country

as a practice. Next, the students submit the cards, and the teacher shows them on the blackboard, highlighting good examples and some mistakes that need to be corrected. According to Scrivener (2011) "in the language focus stage, the teacher may conduct some form of practice of specific language feature which the task has provoked and offer offline correction" (p. 61). Unlike communicative language teaching, which regards communication as the center of the curriculum goal (Nunan, 2004, p. 8), students need to pay attention to language forms during the process of task under the TBLT model (Scrivener, 2011, p. 60). Therefore, in the second half of the course, it is necessary to analyze the form of phrasal verbs. In the process of the task, in order to avoid interrupting the fluency of the students, and the teacher judges that some of the mistakes made by the students will affect their absorption of the knowledge points of this lesson, so as to provide offline correction in this stage (Scrivener, 2011, p. 159). At the end of the class, activity 7 can be used as an assessment. This activity requires students to write a paragraph related to the topic. In this case, the teacher can measure whether students have a good grasp of this lesson through their works (Scrivener, 2011, p. 408). What is more, the teacher shows good examples and some examples that need improvement, which can promote students' understanding of goals and criteria; help students know how to improve; and value their motivation (Scrivener, 2011, p. 409). A class is successfully completed after all activities are over.

## 7. Conclusion

This article explains the process of a class and gives rationale to every activity in the class. In the reading class under the TBLT mode, the teacher first conducts a warm-up session, and introduces the topics and tasks of this class through students discussing the problems presented by the teacher. This not only stimulates the motivation of the students, but also promotes a good class atmosphere, which is a vital part. Then the teacher led the whole class into the reading session. In this session, students need to read three times, skimming, scanning and intensive reading. The focus and speed of these three passes are different, so teachers can use activities 2a, 2b and activity 3 in the textbook to guide students how to grasp the key points to browse the article. Through such exercises, students can master the reading methods and read effectively, i.e., spend less time, and understand the content of the article more comprehensively. After reading the material, the teacher sets up activities with re-phrasing to strengthen students' mastery of language knowledge (phrasal verb). It is not enough to just understand the words. Students need to know how to use them in real communication. Therefore, the course enters the task cycle link. The teacher divides the students into two groups, assigning tasks. And the teacher lets the groups complete their own tasks, and writes down their own answers. At the same time, the teacher plays audio to enable students to master the intonation and stress of the language. After the tasks in the group are completed, the students need to use the language they have been exposed to communicate across the group, sharing their views with another group members, and take notes. In such a task link, students develop interlanguage through the process of interaction. After the task, the teacher analyzes the language form. And assign activity 7 to let students practice using the knowledge learned in this class. At the end of the course, the teacher reviews the students'

exercises and picks out good examples and errors that need to be emphasized. Since encouragement can reinforce the motivation of students, while pointing out mistakes can allow students to correct them in time. In short, students can learn reading methods, master new vocabulary, and use new vocabulary in communication in a series of classroom activities. These are the ultimate aims of this lesson.

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