

Designing effective lesson plans using Tagore's works for different language proficiency levels

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Abstract

This research investigates how to create engaging lesson plans for students with beginning, intermediate, and advanced language proficiency levels that make use of Rabindranath Tagore's writings. With their richness in language, culture, and philosophy, Tagore's writings present a special chance to improve language learning while promoting critical thinking and cultural understanding. This research, based on well-established frameworks for language acquisition and Tagore's educational philosophy, creates customized lesson plans that modify his literary works to meet the language requirements of a wide range of students. With texts ranging from straightforward poems to intricate essays, the lesson plans use individualized instruction and place a strong emphasis on exercises that advance students' vocabulary, comprehension, and analytical abilities. In addition, the study discusses issues of linguistic complexity and cultural background and provides workable methods to ensure that Tagore's writings are understandable to all students. By fusing literature with language acquisition, this study shows how Tagore's enduring contributions might improve language training and the overall educational experience.

Keywords: *Lesson plans, Rabindranath Tagore, Learning, Critical Thinking, Educational Experience.*

1. Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the most well-known writers of the 20th century, renowned for his many contributions to writing, poetry, drama, and music. His writings provide deep insights into spirituality, nature, and the human condition that cut over linguistic and national barriers. The literary works of Tagore, who wrote in Bengali at first and then translated into other languages, are highly regarded for their rich emotional content, universal themes, and exquisite lyrical style. Literature serves as a window into diverse cultures and viewpoints, while also serving as a medium for language development, making it an indispensable tool for language teaching.

It has long been known that incorporating literary

materials into language instruction improves language ability. Reading literature, especially works by authors like Tagore, exposes pupils to sophisticated linguistic patterns while also fostering a profound engagement with existential, ethical, and cultural issues. However, when designing lesson plans based on such rich books, it is crucial to carefully consider the students' degree of linguistic competency. The intricacy of Tagore's writings can either be an inspiration or a problem for students at various phases of their language learning. Therefore, we must specifically design lesson plans to meet the needs of beginning, intermediate, and advanced students, while also making the literary material both understandable and relevant.

This essay focuses on creating engaging lesson plans that accommodate different language proficiency levels by utilizing Tagore's writings. Teachers can promote language abilities such as reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, and critical thinking by choosing relevant texts and developing diverse teaching strategies. Additionally, because Tagore's writings center on universal human experiences, they give students a forum to discuss more complex subjects like individualism, social justice, and the interaction between humans and the natural world.

This study's goal is to provide a methodical approach to lesson design that incorporates Tagore's writings into language instruction so that learners of all skill levels can benefit from these classic works' linguistic, intellectual, and cultural enrichment. This study bridges the gap between literary studies and language instruction, demonstrating how the writings of a renowned author such as Tagore can enhance educational goals and language proficiency.

2. Literature Review

In every activity, preparation is the key to selecting a plan that will help individuals reach their goals and objectives. The same is true for education. The planning tool used in education is the lesson plan, which is a comprehensive statement of an instructor's plan of instruction for a particular lesson meant to assist students in achieving a certain learning target. Teachers can use lesson plans to arrange content, materials, time, teaching

techniques, and support in the classroom. Additionally, they inform students about the course material and assessment procedures (TEAL Center, 2010). Many scholars believe that lesson planning is essential to establishing a successful learning environment (Clark & Dunn 1991; Johnson 2000). Teachers typically create lesson plans, which include the content to teach, the technique, the time, the place, the students' evaluations, and a detailed description of the learning process (Neisari & Heidari, 2014). Jones et al. (2011) and Ko (2012) highlighted the importance of lesson planning and made it a major element of teachers' daily routines. To achieve the best results, new ESL teachers should combine their teaching contributions based on the needs of the lesson and the common tactics of a successful class in a written plan, according to Ab Aziz et al., 2019; Widiati et al., 2018. Failure to create a lesson plan may impact the quality of instruction (Heidari et al., 2015). Though intricate, a well-structured lesson-planning procedure can act as a guide for inexperienced educators as they hone their lesson-planning techniques and style (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Every researcher who writes about teaching confirms the value of lesson plans. By ensuring a successful teaching and learning process, lesson plans foster the development of both educators and learners.

Teachers need to prepare lesson plans ahead of time, regardless of their degree of experience (Wandberg & Rohwer, 2003; Syed Ali, 2018). There are several ways to accomplish this; one popular method is to use a computer-assisted lesson-planning tool that supports teachers' lesson-planning processes and is perfect for meeting the demands of novice ESL teachers (Ong et al., 2017). Despite the introduction of the daily lesson plan decades ago, teachers continue to use paper lesson plans in a traditional manner. For daily lesson plans, any format is acceptable as long as it is presentable when requested by the authorities. However, this methodology has revealed some significant shortcomings. Thus, using technology in the information age can improve the process of lesson planning. Several studies have indicated that an alternate means of supporting the process of lesson planning is the electronic support system (Fathil et al., 2021). Lesson plans are essential when teaching English, but ESL teachers often find them confusing. It may be necessary for them to create their own lesson plans for global institutions. Beginners can use a simple template for ESL lesson plans to begin constructing their own lesson plans (Nodirovna & Temirovna, 2022). Brittin (2005) asserts that in order to establish a conducive learning environment for pupils, teachers must organize their resources, tactics, and schedule. According to Kagan and Tippins (1992), creating a lesson plan assists pre-service teachers in setting goals, organizing their activities, and receiving feedback from their supervisors. In developing a lesson plan,

educators utilize a variety of specialized expertise. These comprise curriculum knowledge, learner knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, content knowledge, and an awareness of educational situations, according to Tagle et al. (2020). While creating effective lesson plans for new teachers is not an effortless task, there are several templates that can be quite helpful.

When the teaching-learning process is precise and well-planned, it can be beneficial and successful. Conversely, random and disorganized planning results in unfocused and inefficient learning experiences (Lederman & Niess, 2000). Lesson planning links curriculum and textbook requirements with classroom instruction (Li, Chen, & Khum, 2009). Although a lesson plan doesn't have to be very long, it does require a lot of work on the part of the instructor in order to ensure a more successful teaching session (MacDonald & Phillips, 2005). Process-oriented and student-centered classes are generally more effective than inflexible, procedurally ambiguous, and teacher-oriented lessons, according to Clement (2000) and Ogden (2001). Planning lessons is critical for the children's benefit. Thus, instead of focusing on "What am I going to cover tomorrow?" educators need to ask themselves, "What are my students going to learn, achieve, and accomplish tomorrow?" (Referenced in Phan, Maebuta, and Dorovolomo). One could argue that preparation is an essential component of a teacher's work (Gallego, 2007). Research in this area indicates that EFL teachers sometimes find it difficult to develop lesson plans that are effective (Permana, 2010). McCutcheon (1980) distinguished between internal and external elements that influence lesson planning. Self-assurance, a greater understanding of the material, the ability to facilitate more seamless classes, and the capability to foresee issues before they arise are among the internal motivators for teachers. The exterior defenses include following the principal's instructions and, if necessary, overseeing the class's use of a substitute teacher. According to another study, the reasons why lesson plans are challenging to make are time constraints, difficulties in producing assessments, and a lack of contextual training (Jasmi, 2014). Because of the difficulties instructors face when putting their lesson plans into practice, some just write them out of obligation and never use the content inside the classroom. Lesson Plan Structure

While teacher training programs usually teach novices how to design comprehensive lesson plans, the process can be challenging due to the prevalence of the linear model and the scarcity of empirical evidence. Curriculum and lesson planning have mostly adhered to a linear framework since the 1950s, with objectives coming first and evaluation coming last. But the linear model

gained popularity in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of pedagogical and curriculum changes. This logical approach to planning owes much to instrumental interpretations of Tyler's Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (1949), which is remarkably in its 41st edition today. It also owes a lot to other theorists who developed variants utilizing more intricate constructs surrounding instruction (Gagné, 1970; John, 2006) as well as extended taxonomies of learning outcomes (Bloom, 1956). Robert Gagné outlined the three phases of learning in 1988. Learning occurs in three stages: practice, guidance, and need or desire. In the beginning, we must have a particular need or desire to study anything. Since our attention span is limited, we can only recall what we pay attention to. During the guiding stage, we temporarily store information in our short-term memory. We decide whether to use the information immediately or store it for later use. To commit knowledge to long-term memory, we repeat what we have learned and make connections between it and new information. Finally, we put into practice what we have learned on our own. Practice is key to storing information in long-term memory. Bonwell and Eison (1991) assert that we can incorporate active learning in the classroom by altering typical lectures. According to research, letting students combine their notes, include quick demos, and complete ungraded writing assignments can greatly enhance learning.

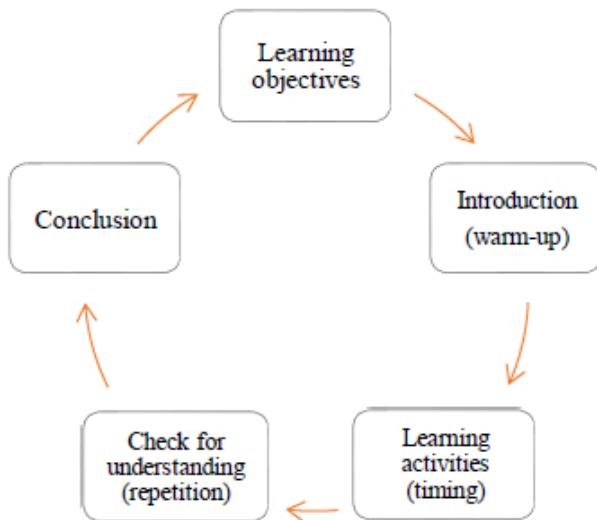


Figure 1 The Cycle of Lesson Planning

The process diagram in Figure No. 1 shows the steps in lesson planning that are recommended by the majority of the researchers. It begins with having clear learning goals and ends with achieving the goals. Warm-up exercises should come first in the introduction, then activities with time limits. Knowing whether students understood the material after the activities is a crucial step in lesson

planning; it also serves as a repetition for the students. Finally, a conclusion can be an evaluation or a summary of the entire lesson. To make the lesson plan better, the teacher must carefully plan each step and evaluate it after completion.

3. Theoretical Framework for Lesson Plan Using Rabindra Nath Tagore's work

A strong theoretical framework that covers literary analysis and language acquisition is necessary for creating lesson plans that effectively integrate Rabindranath Tagore's writings into language learning. With the help of this framework, which combines theories of literary pedagogy, individualized teaching, and language competency, Tagore's writings can be made more accessible to a wider range of language learners while maintaining their cultural and educational significance.

1. Theories of Language Acquisition

The study's lesson plans, which highlight the organic growth of linguistic ability across proficiency levels, are based on well-known theories of language acquisition.

Stephen Krashen's information Hypothesis states that language learners learn language most efficiently when they are exposed to understandable information that is just a little bit beyond their present skill level ($i + 1$). When employing Tagore's writings, the texts selected for each competence level should present a challenge to students while being easily available to promote comprehension and involvement. Simpler poetry or short stories with straightforward language and plots would be appropriate reading for novices. More intricate stories and essays would provide intermediate and advanced learners the required language challenge.

Lev Vygotsky proposed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which postulates that students learn best when aided by a more experienced person, such as a teacher or peer. Scaffolding practices, like guided reading, teacher explanations, and peer participation, enable students to access texts that may appear too challenging at first in Tagore-based classes. This helps the students improve their language competence within their Zone of competence.

Sociocultural Theory: This theory places a strong emphasis on how social contact aids in language acquisition. With their deep cultural and social topics, Tagore's writings offer a forum for conversations, arguments, and group education. These social encounters help students build their language skills while also immersing them in significant cultural exchanges, especially when it comes to the cultural background that informs Tagore's writing.

2. Personalized Education and Increasing Levels of Expertise

Differentiated instruction is crucial for teaching Tagore's works to pupils with diverse levels of linguistic competency. Differentiation entails tailoring the process, product, and content to each learner's unique requirements. To match texts and tasks with suitable skill levels, the lesson plans will adhere to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or other comparable frameworks:

Intermediate Level (A1–A2): Learners are only now starting to understand fundamental language structures at this level. Beginner-level texts will be easy-to-understand poetry, including passages from "The Crescent Moon" or "The Gardener." These books concentrate on common language, simple sentence construction, and well-known subjects like family, love, and the outdoors. Students will be able to develop the fundamental language skills they need by working through comprehension questions, visual aids, and scaffolded lesson activities.

Intermediate Level (B1–B2): Learners at this level are able to work with longer, more intricate texts, like short stories like "Kabuliwala" or "The Postmaster," which have deeper themes like grief, empathy, and human connection. More complex syntax, figurative language, and cultural allusions are introduced in these compositions. Character analysis, theme discussions, and critical thinking will be the main activities, with linguistic support provided by focused grammar drills and vocabulary building.

Advanced Level (C1–C2): Students at this level are able to analyze literature that is extremely complex, such as passages from "Gitanjali" or writings about "Nationalism." These writings provide philosophical insights, abstract ideas, and intricate grammar. At this point, the focus switches to debates, analytical writing, and activities using comparative literature. The exploration of Tagore's stylistic methods, symbolism, and wider cultural ramifications will foster critical thinking and nuanced language use among the learners.

3. Education through Literature

Teaching literature as a component of language learning entails developing an understanding for literary form, cultural background, and thematic complexity in addition to language acquisition. Such research can be facilitated by the allegory, symbolism, and poetic beauty found in Tagore's works. The following components make up the literary pedagogy framework in these lesson plans:

Theory of Reader Response: This idea highlights the reader's role in text interpretation and contends that readers' unique experiences influence their understanding of literary works. Text meaning is increased and language development is improved by encouraging students to

connect Tagore's themes to their own experiences through reflection journals, class debates, or creative projects.

Cultural & Historical Context: The political, social, and cultural milieu of colonial India is a strong influence on Tagore's writings. The lesson plans will integrate contextual learning strategies by providing background information on Indian society, the biography of Tagore, and the themes of nationalism, individualism, and spirituality that he explored in his writings. This contextualization enhances students' language and culture learning by assisting them in understanding the ethical conundrums and cultural nuances in the text.

Critical literacy: By emphasizing the underlying ideologies and power structures in texts, this teaching approach challenges students to read critically and ask questions. Tagore's writings can be studied by advanced students using perspectives from fields like environmentalism, gender studies, and postcolonialism. Students' ability to think critically and reflect deeply is enhanced when they participate in critical literacy activities, in addition to developing their advanced language abilities.

4. Assessment and Learning Modes

By their very nature, Tagore's writings encourage a variety of teaching approaches that take into account the interests and strengths of individual students. The following will be included in lesson plans:

Visual learning: Assisting comprehension, particularly for beginning-level pupils, by the use of pictures, videos, and other visual representations of Tagore's poems and themes.

Auditory Learning: Students can improve their listening comprehension and get an appreciation for Tagore's musical language, especially in poetry, by listening to recitations or musical versions of his works.

Kinesthetic Learning: Involving students in role-plays, imaginative reenactments of Tagore's plays, or dramatizations of his short stories promotes active learning and strengthens language structures in a more dynamic setting.

Depending on the student's level of skill, several assessment methodologies will be used. Formative and summative assessments, like vocabulary tests, reading comprehension exams, analytical essays, and oral presentations, will be the main focus. The objective is to examine students' critical engagement with the text and its cultural context in addition to their language acquisition.

Using the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, this theoretical framework integrates literary pedagogy, differentiated education, language acquisition theories, and multimodal learning to produce extensive lesson plans. Teachers can promote language learning as well as literary appreciation by carefully choosing texts and structuring instruction to match students' skill levels. This way, Tagore's vast

cultural legacy will be utilized as a valuable instrument in language training.

4. Challenges and Solutions

Incorporating Rabindranath Tagore's works into language learning offers rich opportunities for enhancing linguistic skills and cultural understanding. However, there are several challenges in adapting these complex and nuanced texts for learners at different language proficiency levels. Below, I outline the main challenges and provide corresponding solutions to ensure that Tagore's works are accessible, engaging, and educationally effective for a diverse range of learners.

1. Linguistic Complexity of Tagore's Works

Tagore's writing, particularly his essays and philosophical poetry, often contains advanced vocabulary, intricate syntax, and cultural references that may be difficult for learners, especially at beginner and intermediate levels. His use of metaphor, symbolism, and philosophical concepts may also be challenging for learners with limited language proficiency.

Solution: Text Simplification and Gradual Introduction

- **Simplified Texts for Beginners:** For beginners, educators can use simplified or abridged versions of Tagore's works that retain the core ideas and themes but use more accessible language. Selections from **The Crescent Moon** and **The Gardener** can be prioritized for their simpler language and universal themes like childhood, love, and nature.
- **Pre-Teaching Vocabulary:** Key vocabulary words and cultural references can be pre-taught using multimedia aids, word lists, and visual representations to help learners familiarize themselves with difficult terms before engaging with the text.
- **Chunking and Scaffolding:** Break down longer texts into manageable sections (chunking) and provide scaffolding, such as comprehension questions, guiding notes, and summaries, to help learners navigate complex sentences and ideas gradually.

2. Cultural and Philosophical Context

Tagore's works are deeply rooted in Indian culture, history, and philosophy. Concepts such as spirituality,

nationalism, and social justice, which are central to many of his works, may be unfamiliar or difficult for learners to grasp, especially those from different cultural backgrounds.

Solution: Cultural Contextualization and Integration

- **Background Information and Contextualization:** Provide students with background information about Tagore's life, Indian society, and historical events that influenced his writing. This can be done through short lectures, videos, or articles that introduce relevant cultural and historical context before reading the text.
- **Multimedia Resources:** Incorporate multimedia elements, such as documentaries, music, and images related to Tagore's works, to help students visually and aurally connect with the cultural aspects of the text.
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Encourage students to compare themes in Tagore's works with those from their own culture or other world literatures. This helps bridge the gap between unfamiliar cultural references and learners' own experiences.

3. Maintaining Learner Engagement

For students at different proficiency levels, maintaining engagement with texts that may be complex, abstract, or philosophical can be difficult. Tagore's works, especially his more reflective essays and poetry, may require a level of patience and focus that learners struggle with, especially if the material feels distant from their own lives.

Solution: Active Learning and Personalization

- **Creative and Interactive Activities:** Design activities that allow learners to interact with the text in creative ways, such as role-playing scenes from Tagore's stories, creating visual artwork inspired by his poetry, or performing group recitations. Engaging different learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) helps students connect with the text.
- **Personal Reflection:** Encourage learners to reflect on how the themes in Tagore's works relate to their own lives or contemporary issues. Reflection journals, personal essays, and class discussions where students can express their personal responses make the material feel more relevant and engaging.

- **Choice of Texts and Themes:** Give learners some choice in the texts or themes they explore within Tagore's corpus. For example, students can choose between poems about nature or short stories about human relationships, ensuring that they engage with content that resonates with their interests.

4. Differentiating Instruction Across Proficiency Levels

One of the most significant challenges in using Tagore's works across different proficiency levels is ensuring that the materials and instructional strategies are appropriately differentiated. Beginners may need more linguistic support, while advanced learners may require deeper analytical tasks. Balancing these needs within a single curriculum can be complex.

Solution: Differentiation and Scaffolding

- **Tailored Text Selection:** For beginners, focus on simpler poems and short stories with accessible language and themes, while advanced learners can explore more challenging texts, such as philosophical essays and longer, more complex poetry. Intermediate learners should work with texts that offer some complexity but are still manageable.
- **Scaffolded Instruction:** For each proficiency level, scaffolded instruction can be provided by breaking down complex tasks into simpler steps. For instance, beginners may engage in sentence-level comprehension exercises, while advanced learners focus on writing analytical essays or conducting independent research on the themes in Tagore's works.
- **Flexible Assignments:** Create flexible assignments that allow learners to complete tasks based on their skill level. For example, beginners can complete a vocabulary-based quiz, intermediate learners can write a character analysis, and advanced learners can engage in a debate or comparative literature analysis.

5. Assessing Both Language Skills and Literary Understanding

Assessing language proficiency through literary texts poses challenges, as students must demonstrate not only comprehension of the language but also deeper engagement with literary themes and cultural context. This dual focus requires careful balancing in assessment methods.

Solution: Integrated and Multimodal Assessments

- **Formative and Summative Assessments:** Use a mix of formative assessments (ongoing, low-stakes evaluations such as discussion participation, reflection journals, and peer reviews) and summative assessments (essays, exams, presentations) to gauge both language skills and literary comprehension.
- **Multimodal Assessments:** Incorporate a range of assessment methods to evaluate different skills—oral presentations for speaking proficiency, written essays for critical analysis, creative projects for engagement with themes, and reading quizzes for comprehension. For beginners, use simpler formats like multiple-choice quizzes, while advanced learners engage in more complex tasks such as critical essays or debates.
- **Rubrics with Clear Criteria:** Design rubrics that assess language skills (grammar, vocabulary, fluency) alongside literary analysis (theme exploration, textual evidence, and cultural context). Clear criteria help students understand the expectations for both linguistic and analytical performance.

6. Balancing Language Focus with Literary Depth

Teachers may struggle to balance the language-learning goals of the lesson with a deep exploration of Tagore's literary themes. Focusing too much on language structure may detract from the richness of the literature, while delving too deeply into literary analysis may overwhelm learners, especially beginners.

Solution: Integrated Language and Literature Approach

- **Language Skills through Literary Analysis:** Design activities where language skills are developed through literary analysis. For example, grammar exercises can be drawn from sentences in Tagore's works, while vocabulary lessons can be based on recurring themes or motifs in the text.
- **Thematic Focus for Deeper Engagement:** Center lessons around key themes in Tagore's works (e.g., love, nature, human connection, or nationalism) and use these themes to guide both language and literary activities. This ensures that students are engaging with the deeper content of the text while also building their language skills.

- **Layered Discussions:** Start with language-focused discussions (e.g., vocabulary or sentence structure) and gradually move to more abstract themes (e.g., symbolism, social critique) as students become more comfortable with the language and content. This scaffolding ensures that both language and literary skills are addressed.

5. Conclusion

Creating engaging lesson plans that integrate Rabindranath Tagore's writings for students of varying language competence levels is a special chance to combine language instruction with literary and cultural studies. With their universal topics and poetic flair, Tagore's writings are a great way to encourage language development in pupils while also getting them to think critically and explore different cultures. Teachers can adapt Tagore's works to the unique requirements of beginning, intermediate, and advanced learners by using differentiated instruction and applying theories of language acquisition such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

While intermediate learners can explore short stories that offer more intricate language structures and thematic depth, beginners can benefit from simpler texts such as Tagore's poetry, which serve as a foundation for vocabulary growth and comprehension. Studying Tagore's complex poetry and philosophical essays can let advanced students analyze and explore the sociopolitical and cultural background of his works in greater detail. All students, regardless of competence level, can access and enjoy the richness of Tagore's literature thanks to the utilization of a variety of teaching tactics, such as scaffolding, visual aids, and collaborative learning.

This method emphasizes how crucial it is to incorporate literature into language instruction in order to promote empathy, cultural awareness, and a greater comprehension of human experience in addition to language proficiency. Through the creation of linguistically appropriate and intellectually engaging lesson plans, educators can use the enduring influence of Tagore's literary works to craft significant and transformative learning opportunities. This study shows that Rabindranath Tagore's literary legacy may continue to inspire and educate students around the world through careful text selection and flexible teaching strategies.

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