



# Lesson planning in Afghan school

A quantitative study on the use of lesson plans in primary schools of Parwan,  
Afghanistan

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## **ABSTRACT**

This is a quantitative study which explores the use of Lesson Plans (LPs) in Afghan primary schools. The main objectives of this study were to find out the implementation method of LPs, reasons of applying LPs and teachers' views on LPs.

This study was conducted in three districts (Shekh Ali, Siah Gerd and Shinwari) and Charikar city of Parwan Province and data was collected by questionnaires filled in by 200 language and math teachers (100 male and 100 female).

The main findings of the research show that all teachers regardless of sex, education level and teaching experiences claimed that they used LPs in their teaching. A majority of teachers, regardless of sex, education background and years of teaching experience elaborated LPs of their own and did not use the format instructed by Teacher Training Colleges (TTC). Most teachers prepared their LPs one day before and at home. To consider the importance of LP stages the findings show that the majority of both male and female teachers responded to all stages. Through a short glance on reasons of applying LPs we see that 50% of both male and female teachers used LPs to achieve the goal. More experienced teachers didn't use LPs because of having enough experiences. Important parts of LPs include motivation of students and student activities. The study found that teachers often motivated their students by telling a story or poem. Group work was a common activity.

One implication of this study is that the TTC should revise their teaching on LPs since hardly any teacher seems to use these formats.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

DEM	District Education Management
ILPs	Individual Lesson Plans
LPs	Lesson Plans
MOE	Ministry of Education
NESP	National Education Strategic Program
TTC	Teacher Training College
UK	United Kingdom

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching and learning are two complicated concepts that researchers and educationalists have debated for many centuries. We know that both teachers and students have active parts in the learning and teaching process. Competent and professional teachers design a mind map or conceptual map for their teaching to achieve their aims and objectives; this can be called planning (MoE, 2009).

According to Froutan (2008) a lesson plan (LP) describes activities that the teacher arranges for a specific time period and is related to learning objectives, subject content and students' abilities. Preparing and implementing a lesson plan is helpful for both teachers and students, so that the teacher's instruction occurs successfully and motivates students to take active part in the learning process. In recent years, reforming of the teaching profession and restructuring the formal teacher education in the UK and across the world have increased and there is more emphasis on the importance of competence on teacher students as regards skills of curriculum design and lesson planning (John, 2006). It is important to think about students' needs, interests and abilities when preparing LPs. Plasmas Causton-Theoharis et al (2008) state that in the designing of lesson plans students' diversity and different needs should be considered. Educators need to rethink planning and structuring of lessons so that all students achieve better results. According to Ministry of Education (2006) using a lesson plan is necessary for every teacher in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Education (MoE) focuses on teacher competence and professional development as well as improvement of lesson planning and delivery techniques (ibid.).

The MoE seeks to promote interactive learning by running a few innovative teachers training programs. Games, plays and physical activities have been introduced as part of the teaching and learning process and Individual Lesson Plans (ILPs) have been introduced in many schools (Ministry of Education, 2008). An individual learning plans (ILPs) is a type of planning which design by students with guidance of school advisor and parents. This type of planning helps students that by focusing three developmental domains of academic, career and personal/social plan for their future and also it helps teachers to observe students development (Hope High School, 2007).

### **Problem Area**

Afghanistan is a developing country which nowadays is experiencing quality education but still there are lots of problems that cause low quality education. Lack of qualified teachers is one of the causes which the majority of school teachers (especially remote areas) are lack of pedagogical content knowledge which in the result they use poor teaching methods. Do not planning a lesson is another problem which cause low quality teaching. LP helps teachers to teach effectively and achieve the goal.

Most of Afghan teachers design lesson plan but have problems in its implementing, in some remote areas the teachers are unaware of designing lesson plan, because most of them are 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates.

To respond the above issues and problems this research conducted to explore the use of lesson plans in Afghanistan primary schools and find out the methods of applying LP, reasons of using and not using LP and teacher's views on LPs.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to explore the use of lesson plans in Afghan primary schools. In order to achieve this aim the objectives are:

- To find out how and why teachers apply LP as instructed in TTCs or in teacher training programs
- To find out teachers' views on LP

## **Research questions**

1. What kinds of LP are applied and how are they implemented?
2. Why or why not do teachers use lesson plans?
3. What are the teachers' views on LP?

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Some Issues of Teaching and Learning

Historically, and still today researchers and educationalists have debated on the two complex issues of learning and teaching. They have experienced various results and have developed different theories and aspects about learning and teaching. There is no single opinion or definition of learning; every researcher and educationalist have their own views. Learning is often said to be gaining of new knowledge, skills and attitudes (Karlsson & Mansory, 2003). Schunk (2011) states, that learning includes getting and changing knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Thus, knowledge is not only collecting information for recalling; learners should also have or get the ability to do something and construct knowledge by their own to bring positive changes in their attitudes and social life. Understanding of facts, opinions and concepts is called knowledge Ministry of Education (2009). Skill is the capacity to do an action and there are two types of skills 1) physical skills like writing an essay for example, or counting in math and 2) mental skills, like discussing logically, distinguishing, grouping, comparing, analyzing, concluding and judging. Feeling about important issues can be an attitude, like *Adab*, helping others, to be patient and pay attention Ministry of Education (2009). In modern Persian dictionary the word *Adab* is translated as good manners. According to Karlsson & Mansory (2007) “*Adab* is about good manners towards others or, in other words, about social conduct according to prevailing norms. *Adab* is the behaviour a child should learn” p. 154)

Teaching can be seen as arranged and planned activities containing for example a topic, objectives, material, time plan, methods, and place and includes not least a learner to receive the information (knowledge, attitude and skills). The teacher has an important role in the cognitive construction and social life of human beings and should therefore be careful when selecting the subject, objective, teaching method, time, environment and students (Hazem, 2011).

When teacher and students implement the process of teaching and learning successfully and are interested in the learning and teaching process we can say that teaching and learning are visible in their classrooms (Hattie, 2008). Both teacher and student need skills and knowledge to get good learning outcomes. The teacher must be professional and know how learning has occurred and must learn from experience and experiment, monitor, seek and give feedback to students and also be able to use various teaching strategies. If the method does not work well, teachers should have the ability to change and select a more effective method. It is important that teaching is visible to the students and learning is visible to the teacher. In other words, when the student becomes the teacher and the teacher becomes the learner the outcomes of teaching and learning are good (ibid).

Effective teaching requires lesson planning to achieve learning objectives; it is necessary and even the responsibility of teachers to plan their teaching (Tanni, 2012). “A fundamental teacher’s task is lesson planning. Teachers plan lessons to transform, a curriculum or syllabus, institutional expectations and their educational conceptions into practical guidelines for the classroom” (ibid, p. 2). In addition, Dunn, et al., (2010) state:

Minimally, lesson plans should indicate the specific instructional objectives that students are required to master, alternative ways of learning, and the identification of which way of learning is most appropriate for each student based on their cognitive-processing and perceptual styles. Students also need to know when and how mastery can be evidenced, and the plan should indicate these points (p. 195).

Dunn et al. (2010) refer to the cognitive theory of learning, which describes gaining of knowledge as a mental activity. The cognitive approach focuses on making knowledge meaningful and helping learners organize and relate new information to previous knowledge in memory (Yilmaz, 2011). Behaviorism on the other side, views learning as a process of obtaining knowledge and teaching as a process of transferring knowledge (Boghossian, 2006).

According to Richards & Bohlke, (2011), teachers should carefully select effective teaching methods for each particular lesson and ensure that the lesson plan includes opportunities for student practice. Allowing students to more practicing and the making of knowledge by students refer to the constructivist theory of learning in which knowledge is viewed as an active process of constructing knowledge, i.e. students are active participants in a learning process by seeking to find meaning in their own experiences. Instructions in the process of supporting and construction of knowledge (Boghossian, 2006).

## **Reasons for Lesson Planning**

Planning is essential in all parts of human beings' lives. It is like a schedule to direct us for doing our work step by step without time waste and achieving our aims and objectives. Teachers also need to plan their teaching to achieve the aims and objectives of lessons and get better learning outcomes. Planning a lesson is crucial in order to teach an effective lesson (Richards & Bohlke, 2011).The design of lesson plans (LPs) is crucial so that teachers can include the required curriculum content and moreover, so that administrators can confirm that teachers are doing their job accordingly (Dunn, et al, 2010). It means that when teachers have LPs the administrators can verify that teachers teach based on curriculum. Research has shown that teachers feel more confident when the introduction, presentation and conclusion of the lesson are clear in the lesson plan. Teachers who do not have lesson plans are like a blind without a walking stick that depart from one place to another and don't achieve their objectives (Froutan, 2008).

Using Bloom's Taxonomy can be useful for a basic planning in education and for evaluating students' learning systematically (Gray & Waggoner, 2002). Before Bloom's taxonomy mostly teachers were focusing on "knowledge", the lowest level of the Taxonomy, and little time was spent on higher-level thinking to assist students in creative applications of their knowledge. Using Bloom's Taxonomy promotes higher-order thinking skills of students, and teachers may use this tool to plan content, objectives, and activities at various cognitive levels for different students. When teachers design their teaching as Bloom's taxonomy the students will be able to design personally meaningful products that allow them to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of ways (ibid). Teachers who design their plans based on high order level of Bloom's Taxonomy may teach effectively and students cognitive and creativity skills may increase. In Afghanistan mostly teachers' focus on low level of Bloom's Taxonomy, memorization and recalling factual knowledge is the method of learning which is not more helpful for students to be creative. This method was common in China too which they was focusing on low order thinking skills. However, teachers who were teaching adults in China almost solely taught lower order thinking skills, which are deeply developed in Confucian culture. Wang & Farmer (2008) showed that Chinese teachers believed that creativity is the result of knowledge mastery and without knowledge mastery no individual will become creative.

John (2006) explains that teachers should have the ability of selecting and preparing of resources to plan for their safe and effective organization, and be careful as regards students' interests, language and cultural backgrounds. Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive domain includes knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation and teachers should concentrate on all parts while planning a lesson (Nentl & Zietlow, 2008).

Lesson plans help teachers to ensure that classroom instruction supports curriculum goals and objectives and enable students explain their successful learning (Duncan & Met, 2010; MoE, 2009). By having a lesson plan teachers teach effectively and achieve their objectives and moreover, they may become innovative. LPs provide important resources for teachers to establish lesson goals, allow for careful consideration of available resources and the design of activities accordingly (Lee & Takahashi, 2011).

Having a LP helps the teacher to specify his/her objectives clearly and to achieve them. Also, by having a LP the teacher can analyze the process of teaching and learning by breaking down all its components and he/she can design the teaching process by formulating of objectives, selecting methods and resources, organizing activities, delivery implement on and evaluation of the results (John, 2006).

## **Types of Lesson Plans**

There are many types of LPs that teachers use in their teaching. Some teachers use lesson plans made by them, some follow formats learnt at Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) while others use plans of the textbooks. Personality and teaching method preferences are factors that make teachers plan differently (John, 2006). Experience of teaching is another factor that affects the types of LPs. Richards & Bohlke (2011) found that experienced teachers generally design less detailed lesson plans than beginner teachers and frequently they teach from a mental plan rather than a detailed written lesson plan. MoE (2009) explains that teachers should concentrate on selecting student centered activities and that there should be a logical sequence between all parts of the lesson plan.

A good plan should be flexible and contain clear objectives, variety of activities, active methods, time management, teaching materials and appropriate methods for assessment and learning of students (MoE, 2009). Hughes, (2005) states that "Lesson plans must be flexible enough to account for the needs of dealing with the daily frustrations of student distress, and the effects of student diversity in learning styles, abilities" (p. 118).

When I was hired as a lecturer in TTC in 2008 I was mostly focusing on teacher centered method and I made detailed LPs. I was eager of lecturing and when my lesson was finished I asked some questions for the students to answer and ended my lesson. But after some time I changed my methods of planning and teaching and I focus clarifying examples for clarifying and I seek to relate them to social life.

There is of course no simple formula for making a lesson plan since the factors that make a lesson effective depend on content, teaching method, students' learning preferences, class size and learners' proficiency level. Below is an example of a lesson plan that is taught at TTCs and recommended by MoE (Ministry of Education, 2009):

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson objectives: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Contents	Activities and methods	Materials
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduction and preparation:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class organization</li><li>• Evaluation of the previous lesson</li><li>• Motivating of students</li></ul></li><li>2. Presenting new lesson<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introducing the title and objective of the new lesson</li><li>• Students and teacher role in new lesson</li><li>• Diverse learning activities about the lesson</li></ul></li><li>3. Ending the lesson<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summarizing the new lesson</li><li>• Evaluation of the new lesson</li><li>• Assigning homework</li></ul></li></ol>		

Important points:

- Evaluation
- Discussion

The important point's which are out of LPs frame teachers write the result of evaluation and discussion in here. If there was any problem in teaching methods, materials and time management he/she note those issues in here and make changes on those parts in future for effectiveness of teaching.

## **METHODS**

This study was conducted to explore the use of lesson plans (LPs) in Afghan schools. To achieve the aims and objectives of this study and respond to the research questions, a quantitative approach was designed and utilized in this study. To find out about teachers' views on LPs and comparing their ages, qualifications, experiences and the subject they teach a quantitative method was found appropriate as for example Bell (2010) states: "quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another" (p. 1). I used a questionnaire as tool for collecting the facts and opinions which is an appropriate tool for a quantitative approach (Denscombe, 2010). Time constraints was another reason for selecting this tool, as by using questionnaires we can get quite fact, brief and uncontroversial information and views of a large number of respondents in many places in a limited time (ibid).

### **Procedures**

The study was conducted in three districts and in Charikar city of Parwan province. There was only one questionnaire for teachers which contained teacher background (age, experience, qualification, subject taught, type of class and grade) with 18 questions about the use of LPs (see annex 1) for collecting the data. The data collection took place during a period of approximately five weeks and started on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2013 and finished on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Before starting the data collection I got a school entrance permission letter from the Ministry of Education and thereafter District Education Managers (DEMs) were contacted for cooperation in process of filling in the forms. They helped me in guiding to schools and introducing teachers to fill in the questionnaire. Beforehand, the questionnaire was piloted on two colleagues and four teachers (two males & two females). It was found that no issue or question was needed to reform or change.

The data collection procedure started in a remote area of approximately 70 km from Charikar city, which is called Shekh Ali district. One teacher acted as assistant in collecting the data was selected by me while one more school teacher assistant was selected in guiding to schools and cooperation in case of facing problems by DEM of that district. He was in DEM office and helped us in process of collecting data. The data was collected from four schools of there in three days and totally 40 male teachers filled in the questionnaires. In this district all female classes were taught by male teachers so therefore no female teacher filled in the forms here. Next collection occurred in Siah Gerd district of Parwan province where our Teacher Training College (TTC) is located and there 10 male and 30 female teachers filled in the questionnaires. To contact the female teachers was a bit problematic but the principals of the female schools were male and helped me in distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The third collection took place in Shinwari district where totally 20 teachers (10 males and 10 females) filled in the questionnaires.

Finally, the data collection process ended in Charikar city of Parwan province and there one of the lecturers at Parwan TTC helped me in collecting the data. As a result, totally 80 teachers (20 male and 60 female) filled in the questionnaires. Lack of female teachers in the three

mentioned districts was the reason for selecting more female teachers in Charikar city. Totally, 20 schools (10 boy and 10 girl schools with 10 teachers in each school, i.e. in sum 200, (100 male and 100 female) teachers responded to the questionnaires. The procedure of data collection took approximately three weeks in Charikar city because of the winter leave. All schools were off and there were only 2-3 teachers and the principal present in each school. Therefore I gave the questionnaires to the principals to distribute for the teachers and they distributed them to teachers and teachers filled in them in 3 weeks.

Finally, all respondents responded to all questions except 26 female and 6 male teachers didn't respond to question 18.

## **Limitation**

The use of quantitative method and questionnaire as data collection tool was a limitation of this study. Use of observation would have been more appropriate or could at least have been used as a complementary method but because of time constraints and the fact that schools were on winter vacation only questionnaire was used as data collection tool. Selecting 3 districts and the Charikar city of Parwan province was another limitation of this study. It is clear that collecting data only from one province with limited number of schools may not be very representative to all schools in the country and the results cannot be generalizable. Due to security problems, lack of transportation, long distance and time constraints only three districts and the city of the province were selected for this study.

The fact that the female respondents were mainly from an urban school could also account as a limitation.

Cultural problems like difficulties of contacting and entering female schools were the most important limitation which affected the process of data collection. Because 26 female teachers didn't respond to question 18.

## FINDINGS

This study was conducted in three districts (Shekh Ali, Siah Gerd and Shinwari) and Charikar city of Parwan province. The selected schools are located in rural (west of Parwan) and urban areas (Charikar city) and totally 20 primary schools (12 rural and 8 urban schools) were in the scope of the study. Teachers who filled in the questionnaire were language and math teachers of different qualifications and experiences. Totally 200 teachers (100 male and 100 female) filled in the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Teachers' education level, years of experience and subjects taught; percentage**

Teachers' sex	Education (grade)				Experience (years)				Subjects taught <sup>1</sup>				
	12	14	16	other	< 2	2-4	5-8	> 8	M	D	P	E	A
Male	30	54	11	5	9	26	22	43	44	32	12	7	5
Female	8	74	16	2	3	23	32	42	41	34	8	14	3
Total	38	128	27	7	12	49	54	85	85	66	20	21	8

<sup>1</sup>M: Math; D: Dari; P: Pashto; E: English; A: Arabic

The above table 1 shows that more than 40 % of both male and female teachers have more than 8 years of teaching experience and more than half of the male teachers and almost 75 % of the female teachers have graduated from TTC.

### Types of LPs

As regards use of LPs 88% of both male and female teachers answered that they used LPs and 12 % answered that they used sometimes.

There were different options for types of LPs (self made, TTC format and textbook format) which different teachers selected different options based on their qualification, teaching experiences and sex.

**Table 2: Types of lesson plans used by different teachers; percentage**

LP	sex		Education (grade)				Experience (years)			
	M	F	12	14	16	other	< 2	2-4	5-8	> 8
Made by myself	64	58	55	63	67	42	42	56	72	60
TTC format	20	20	29	17	22	29	8	30	21	15
Textbook format	16	22	16	20	11	29	50	14	7	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Regarding types LPs teachers responded differently. As the above table indicates around 60% of both male and female teachers make their own LPs regardless of their education and teaching experiences. Those with experience less than two years used textbook format than other categories. The TTC format is the least used format of all three.

## Implementation of LPs

Teachers are instructed to consider time, place and implementing method of LPs for achieving lesson goals. According to my experience as a teacher educator, many teachers have problems in preparing and implementing of LPs therefore I desired to find out how Afghan teachers prepare and implement LPs in their teaching. I have found some interesting issues which are described below.

**Table 3: When and where are LPs prepared?**

Time	Male%	Female%	Place	Male%	Female%
several days before	12	20	at home	76	70
one day before	68	60	in school	6	10
same day	20	20	both places	18	20
<b>Total</b>	100	100		100	100

As the above table shows the majority of teachers replied that they prepared their LPs one day before the lesson and at home. The least respondents answered that they prepared LPs several days before.

**Table 4: How are the steps of LPs followed?**

Details	Male %	Female %
Completely	62	70
to a large extent	26	26
to some degree	12	4
<b>Total</b>	100	100

The above table describes how the steps of LPs are followed by teachers in their teaching which more than 66 percent of both male and female teachers marked that they followed all steps of LPs that is written in their LPs. The percentage of male teachers with that of female is three fold higher in response to some degree option.

**Table 5: What is the most important in LPs?**

Details	Male %	Female %
introduction and preparation	14	8
presentation of the new lesson	10	14
Conclusion	32	10
All stages are important	44	68

The above table shows the importance of LP stages based on teachers responses which 32 percent of male teachers answered that conclusion is the most important parts of LPs. Female teachers (68%) answered that all stages are important. Few teachers marked that introduction and preparation is the most important stage of LP.

## Reasons for Applying LPs

Teachers apply LPs because of various reasons which based on those reasons respondents claimed that they applied LPs in their teaching. Some teachers claimed that use of LP saves the time and others answered that applying LP is a teacher duty. Others said that use of LPs helps teachers to vary teaching methods. Motivating students through applying LP was another reason which some answered. Based on teachers responses one who design LP prepare useful and relevant teaching materials and make students to participate in lesson activities and also by use of LPs teachers use various activities in their teaching to teach effectively which these activities organize by making LPs. Also based on respondents answers determining objective is the most important part of a lesson plan which teachers teach based on objectives and students know the expectation of the teachers which in result teachers achieve the goal. So based on mentioned reasons teachers claimed that they use LPs in their teaching.

**Table 6: Reasons for applying LPs based on teachers' sex, education and teaching experience; percentage**

Details	sex		Education (grade)				Experience (years)			
	M (100)	F (100)	12 (38)	14 (128)	16 (27)	Other (7)	< 2 (12)	2-4 (49)	5-8 (54)	>8 (85)
Use of LP is teacher duty	42	34	34	39	37	43	17	45	37	38
To save the time	26	38	21	38	26	0	17	41	30	31
To vary methods	30	40	26	36	52	0	0	33	41	38
To motivate students to participate	16	22	16	20	22	0	33	12	15	24
To prepare materials	44	38	74	31	52	0	33	45	30	47
To organize activities	24	32	11	34	30	14	33	16	30	33
To know the objective of the lesson	44	46	32	48	44	57	50	45	37	49
To achieve the goal	52	48	42	52	48	57	33	33	56	59

As the above table indicates (respondents can have chosen several options) 42 percent of male teachers and 34 percent of female teachers answered that use of LP is teacher duty. More than 45 percent of both male and female teachers answered that they used LPs to know the objective of the lesson. Also more than 50 percent of both male and female respondents replied that they used LPs to achieve the goal. No teacher with less than two years experience answered that use of LPs vary methods while 52 percent of bachelor teachers replied that use of LPs vary methods. Teachers with more than eight years experiences (24%) marked that they used LPs to motivate students to participate. 74 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates answered that they used LPs to prepare materials.

**Table 7: For whom do you made LP?**

LP	sex		Education (grade)				Experience (years)			
	M (100)	F (100)	12 (38)	14 (128)	16 (27)	Other (7)	< 2 (12)	2-4 (49)	5-8 (54)	>8 (85)
My self	98	100	100	98	100	100	100	96	100	100
The Principal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
School inspector	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

As the above table describes almost all teachers responded that they made LP for themselves regardless of sex, educational background or experience. However, 2 male teachers made it for the school inspector.

### Reasons for not applying LP

The National Education Strategic Program (NESP) prescribes the use of LPs as essential for Afghan teachers. In this study some teachers claimed that they did not apply LPs because of different reasons such as, having no time, having enough experience, knowing how to teach, knowing students, knowing what to do and not knowing LP preparing.

**Table 8: why do you not apply LPs? Percentage**

Details	sex		Education (grade)				Experience (years)			
	M (100)	F (100)	12 (38)	14 (128)	16 (27)	Other (7)	< 2 (12)	2-4 (49)	5-8 (54)	>8 (85)
I have no time to prepare LP	8	1	8	3	4	14	17	6	4	2
I don't prepare LP because I have enough experience	9	3	5	5	15	0	0	6	4	8
I don't prepare LP because I know what to do	12	5	11	6	19	0	25	14	4	5
Using LP is waste of time	11	3	18	5	4	0	42	8	6	2
I don't prepare LP because I know how to teach	9	3	5	6	7	0	17	16	2	1
I don't prepare LP because I know my students	6	2	13	2	0	0	25	4	6	0
I don't know how to make LP	1	0	3	0	0	0	8	0	0	1

The above table describes the reasons of not applying LPs based on teachers' sex, qualification and teaching experience.

As the table shows 17 percent of teachers with less than two years experiences replied that they did not have time to make LP. 12 percent of male and six percent of bachelor teachers answered that they did not make LP because of knowing what to do. Also

11percent of male and 18 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates teachers marked that use of LPs is waste of time. Teachers with less than two years experiences (17%) answered that they know how to teach therefore didn't use LPs. Teachers with less than two years experience (8%) replied that they did know to prepare LP.

## Motivation, Activities and Group work

In all types of LPs motivation, activities, and group work are very common issues. The emphasizes on motivating students is strong in the training of teachers at TTCs because motivating students, using various activities and especially group work are believed to help teacher students to teach effectively. Likewise, to achieve good learning achievements teacher students are taught about the necessity of student activities and group work. Therefore, I wanted to find out how trained and experienced teachers look upon this issues.

**Table 9: Types of Motivation used in LP based on teachers sex, education level and experience**

Details	sex		Education (grade)				Experience (years)			
	M (100)	F (100)	12 (38)	14 (128)	16 (27)	Other (7)	< 2 (12)	2-4 (49)	5-8 (54)	>8 (85)
Ask questions about homework	34	22	26	30	26	14	17	24	28	32
Silence the class	10	10	5	11	15	0	8	12	2	14
Ask questions about previous lesson	42	14	63	16	41	14	58	35	26	21
Write the lesson title on blackboard	26	18	24	23	15	14	25	29	19	20
Relate to students' experience	26	12	21	20	15	14	33	22	9	21
Ask students what they know about the new topic	26	22	21	25	26	14	33	33	9	27
Tell a story or poem related to the lesson	58	54	53	55	63	71	33	49	57	62
Check the attendance	28	4	16	18	7	14	8	14	13	20

The above table shows types of motivation teachers used in LP. In general, more than 55% of all respondents answered that they motivated students by telling a story or poem related to lesson.

To compare male with that of female respondents there was a difference between male and female teachers in some options. 42% male teachers answered that they motivate students by asking questions about previous lesson which their percentage was higher than female teachers. There was a considerable difference between male and female teachers in response to check the attendance as type of motivation which 28% male teachers answered that they motivated students by checking attendance. Male teachers (26%) marked that they motivate students by relating lesson to students' experience which their percentage is twofold with that of female teachers.

To consider the findings based on teachers education 63 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates replied that they motivated students by asking questions about previous lesson and 55 percent of

14<sup>th</sup> grade graduates responded that they motivate students by telling story or poem related to lesson. Also 62 percent of teachers with more than eight years of experiences answered mentioned option.

Activities are also prescribed in TTCs for teachers to use in their teaching which they use different activities based on lesson content to teach effectively and achieve the goal. So, therefore I decided to find out which type of activities is used by the teachers in LPs.

**Table 10: Types of activities used in LP based on teachers sex, education level and experience**

Details	sex		Education (grade)				Experience (years)			
	M (100)	F (100)	12 (38)	14 (128)	16 (27)	Other (7)	< 2 (12)	2-4 (49)	5-8 (54)	>8 (85)
Students answer my questions verbally	28	30	26	29	30	43	17	29	22	35
Students write answers to my questions on black board	24	11	16	16	26	29	8	24	15	16
Students ask questions from me	22	14	24	14	22	43	8	20	9	24
Students ask questions from each other	24	36	21	31	37	29	25	20	19	44
Students work in group	76	66	61	73	81	57	92	59	63	80
Students work individually	24	24	24	23	30	29	8	18	19	33
Students read aloud in chorus	14	16	13	14	15	43	8	12	7	22

To look upon the above table more than 70% of both male and female and the majority of teachers regardless of education level and teaching experiences responded that they used group work activity in their teaching. 43percent of other respondents answered that they used an activity which students ask questions from them. Female teachers (36%) marked that students asked questions from each other.

**Table 11: Purpose of Group work used in LP based on teachers sex, education level and experience**

Details	sex		Education (grade)				Experience (years)			
	M (100)	F (100)	12 (38)	14 (128)	16 (27)	Other (7)	< 2 (12)	2-4 (49)	5-8 (54)	>8 (85)
To alleviate the teacher's work	2	4	8	2	3	0	20	4	2	0
To train students in cooperation	18	30	17	27	20	0	15	20	33	21
Because students learn better together	80	66	75	71	77	100	65	76	65	79
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

To see the above table more than 80 percent of male teachers and the majority of all respondents regardless of education level and teaching experience answered that learning

students better together is the purpose of group work. As the table shows 20 percent of teachers with less than two years experience answered that use of group work alleviate teacher work.

## Teachers' views on LP

All the teachers in TTCs instructed to make LPs in their teaching. They have various views on LPs based on their sex, teaching experience and education level. One of the objective and research questions was to find out teachers' views on therefore I decided to find out teachers views on LPs.

**Table 12: Teacher's views on LPs related to teachers sex**

Descriptions	Male%	Female%
Having LP is useful for teachers	92	84
LP helps teachers to achieve lesson objectives	36	36
LP prevent from waste of time	18	14
LP helps teachers to select effective teaching method	38	36
LP helps teachers to prepare teaching aids	6	2
LP is a bridge between theory and action	0	2
By having LP teachers teach based on curriculum and finish the book	10	12
LP makes the lesson interesting for students	6	8
LP improves the quality of education	6	4
LP helps both teacher and student to be active	16	10
LP helps teacher to be self confident	8	6

As the table shows 88 percent of (178 out of 200) respondents viewed that LP is useful for teachers. Male teachers (6%) replied that LP helps teachers to prepare teaching aid. Also 36 percent of both male and female teachers answered that LP helps teachers to achieve lesson objectives.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Types of LP**

To look generally through on findings there are some facts, which should discuss in this chapter as important part of the study. As findings show, around 90 % of the teachers regardless of sex, education level and teaching experiences responded that they apply LP in their teaching and follow the plan completely or to a large extent. Whether this is true or not, I cannot say since there was no possibility to follow up the answers by, for example, classroom observations. The Ministry of Education of Afghanistan requires individual teachers to use LP in their teaching. Similarly, (Tanni, 2012) states that making a lesson plan is necessary and evens the responsibility of teachers in teaching.

Regarding types LPs around 60 percent of both male and female teachers answered that they make their own LPs regardless of their education and teaching experiences, which may be because an expression of teachers' confidence and independence. Only those with less than 2 years of teaching experience used the LPs provided in the textbooks. Remarkably, only 17 % of those with teacher exam (grade 14 in TTC) used the LP they had been instructed to use in their training as teachers. This may indicate that TTCs need to revise their instruction methods and LP formats.

As I experienced during my teaching following prepared LP formats (TTC or other organizations format) is helpful for novice teachers on one hand because arranged LP format may help them in organizing the lesson contents, various activities, time and selecting methods. On the other hand pursuing all details of prepared LP format make individuals limited and is a little time consuming because when teachers concentrate more on details and every minute see his/her plan will not finish the lesson contents on time.

### **Implementation of LP**

While teachers design their LPs they need to focus on the time, place and methods of implementation. So in this regard the majority and even all of teachers in Afghanistan participated in in-service training programs or in TTCs to train on pedagogical skills like teaching methods, curriculum and planning. So in this regards I wanted to find out how the teachers prepare and implement their LPs.

More than 66 percent of respondents replied that they followed all steps of LPs that is written in their LPs. So, in this regard TTCs and in-service trainings emphasize more on following all steps of LPs because by missing one step one may not achieve the lesson goal.

There was a considerable difference in selecting important stages of LP between male and female respondents which 34 percent female teachers answered that all stages of LP are important while the majority of male teachers took in to account the conclusion as the most important stage of LP. It could be helpful for teachers to be careful of or concentrate on all stages of LP because individuals cannot claim that only one stage is the most important. When a teacher do not motivate students to participate actively in learning process, or if do not concentrate on presenting new lesson, it could not be possible to draw all threads of a lesson together and achieve the goal. By introducing the lesson teacher invites students' to pay attention from the very beginning. In this stage teacher motivate students' to show

interest and make sure that they understand the expectations of the lesson (Houston & Beech, 2002).

The majority of teachers marked that they prepare LP one day before teaching which should take in to account as discussable issue. Teachers need time to design LP and think about its implementation to achieve the goals. As (Duncan & Met, 2010) states, teachers need time to think about the objectives and goals of the lesson. It is necessary for teachers to think on logical development of the lesson because it leads students to knowledge improvement and performance skills. Although the majority of teachers answered that they prepared their LPs one day before teaching but it may not be true because Afghan teachers have 26- 28 lessons per week and beside that they have to do another extra works too. So, therefore it's impossible that they make detailed LPs one day before.

### **Reasons for applying LP**

To discuss reasons for applying LP teachers responded differently. Most of them answered that they use LP to achieve the goals and 45 percent answered that they use LP to know the objectives of the lesson (see Table 3). To refer researches we find that Knowing objectives and achieving goals take in to account as the most important part of planning a lesson which without clarifying and understanding of objectives one cannot achieve learning outcomes. Clarifying lesson objectives help teachers to concentrate on teaching time and on the content that student should learn. Also the lesson objectives guide teacher to communicate his/her expectations to students (Houston, & Beech, 2002). Similarly, John (2006), states that teachers who design LP identify the objectives of lesson clearly and achieve them.

A number of teachers responded that they used LP to prepare teaching materials which is an important point and even a part of LP. So preparing teaching aids based on contents of lesson may help teachers to teach effectively and students may show interests to participate actively in learning process.

Although motivation and organizing activities are parts of LPs but few teachers answered that they used LPs to make students to participate and organize activities.

### **Causes for not applying lesson plan**

This is a considerable discussion that some teachers responded that they didn't use LPs in their teaching because of different reasons. The majority of teachers who answered that they did not use LPs were male teachers, 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduates and less than 2 years experience. Those who replied that making of LP is waste of time were male and less than two years experience. If making LP is waste of time, how they claim that they sometimes use LP or why they apply in their teaching. The majority more than eight years experienced teachers answered that they don't use LP because of having enough experience. It could be possible for experienced teachers to teach without using LP but sometimes may not achieve the goals. There was only one teacher answered he didn't know how to make LP. It's discussable that some teachers are unaware of making LP in remote areas because the majority of those are novice or 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduate teachers which they are lack of pedagogical skills and don't know how to make LPs.

## **Types of motivation and activities teachers used in LP**

To look through Tables 9 and 10 we find some considerable issues that should be discussed in this part because motivation is the introductory part of LP and also helps teachers to make students to participate in learning process. Similarly, Duncan & Met (2010, P. 15) states that “Motivation is an inner drive that pushes students to work toward their goals”. Most of the respondents (male and female) marked that they motivate students by telling a story or poem related to lesson. In order some answered that they motivate students by asking questions about previous lesson, home work and checking attendance. It could be useful in Afghan context that most of teachers tell a story or poem to motivate students or somehow this type of motivation is common in our country because students are more eager to hear a story or poem from the teacher related to the lesson and know the relationship of lesson with story or poem and also teachers are interested to make a friendly environment for students to show more interesting in learning process. By asking questions about previous lesson students may concentrate and pay attention more on the lesson therefore some teachers use this type of motivation.

In a short glance through Table 9 we see that there are various types of activities which teachers selected and preferred based on the subject they teach or lesson content. Different teachers had different choices and based on their subject content they used various types of activities. As Houston & Beech (2002) states, by using activities teachers adjust instruction to meet student’s needs in the class and also activities helps students to focus on the content.

The majority of teachers (71 percent) selected group work activity as their prior choice. To increase the participation of students during a lesson group arrangement is the way to do this. As the research showed group work is a method that by using it the teacher ensures which students take active part in learning process (Richards & Bohlke, 2011).

Dividing students in to groups is the way that teachers can meet the needs of diverse students in the class and many students will get benefit from group work and discussion (Houston & Beech, 2002).

The teacher students instructed in TTCs to use group work in their teaching because it is a good activity which students learn from each other and share their experiences with each other. Although group work is useful activity but it has some disadvantages too because some students are dominant and do not allow others to take part which in the result some students will not be able to share their ideas with group.

## **Teacher’s views on LPs**

Generally, the majority of respondents 88 percent (178 out of 200) viewed that use of LP is useful for teachers. Some teachers answered that LP helps teachers to teach effectively. A number of teachers viewed that LP helps teachers to achieve lesson objectives and some respondents answered that LP helps students to achieve learning outcomes. The mentioned views show in order the highest percentage than other categories (Table 8). So, in here it is important to describe some researchers’ views related to mentioned teachers’ views. As Dunn, et al., (2010) states, a lesson plan should specify the lesson objectives that the teacher wants from students to master it. LP should contain various and appropriate learning methods based on students level. Also it should be clear for students that when and how mastery can improve.

Selecting teaching method is very important part of LP which helps teachers to teach effectively. Similarly, Richards & Bohlke, (2011) states that teachers should carefully select effective teaching methods for each particular lesson and ensure that the lesson plan includes opportunities for student practice. Also Ministry of Education (2009) explains that teachers should focus on student centered teaching method.

## CONCLUSION

To use LPs is considered necessary for every Afghan teacher and is prescribed by the Ministry of Education. This study aimed to explore the use of lesson plans in Afghan primary schools and has focused on types and implementation of LPs, reasons of applying and not applying as well as teachers views on LPs.

Majority of the teachers applied the lesson plans which were prepared by them. They complied with the steps as designed by the teachers during lesson plan preparation. However, there has been a format developed by MoE which was not strictly used by the teachers. Instead, they developed and used their own format. This provided the teachers with more flexibility to adjust the lesson plans to the context in which they had to teach.

When it comes to the preparation of LPs well in advance and where, the study found that majority of the teachers prepared the lesson plans at home and at least one day in advance. Female teachers were insisting on implementation of all three stages of LPs namely introduction, presenting the new lesson and concluding the lesson while male teachers thought that among the three steps to conclude the lesson is more important. It implies that female teachers were more committed to the full implementation of the LPs compared to male teachers which indicates the internalization of the importance of the LPs.

Majority of the teachers expressed that LP is an important tool to achieve the objectives of a lesson in an organized and effective manner while some of the teachers also indicated that the LPs bring out students' motivation and effectively organizing the classroom activities. Applying lesson plans in the classroom also helped the teachers to efficiently utilize the time allocated for the teaching period. Some of the teachers also referred to the advantages of the lesson plan as helping them diversify their teaching methods thereby leading to increased students participation in classroom activities.

However, some of the experienced teachers were not so fond of the use of lesson plans and were valuing their experience compared to the use of lesson plans. At the same time, some of the less educated teachers thought that preparing lesson plans is waste of time. This could be due to the fact that less educated teachers are less exposed to the trainings on the importance as well as preparation of lesson plans.

Making LP helps teachers to know the objectives of the lesson and achieve the goals because by determining of lesson objectives individual teachers may clarify their expectations for the students. Therefore, majority of teachers viewed use of LPs from this perspective. In short time of 35 minutes implementing all stages of a lesson was impossible and managing this time refer to planning which one could save the time. Shortage of time was one of the problems in Afghan schools which teachers face in their teaching therefore some viewed that LPs save the time.

The aims and objectives of the study were achieved in this research because the data has been collected through questionnaire from different areas and found the facts and teachers opinions on LPs.

As this study was conducted in one province and the data was collected by questionnaire from 20 schools of three districts and one city of the province, so it cannot be

generalized in many areas neither in Afghanistan nor abroad. The main reason is the limited scope of the study. However, since the realities in Afghan schools are similar. Some of the findings would be found also elsewhere. Filling in the questionnaire by different teachers in different areas anonymously may have enhanced the reliability of the study.

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## ANNEXES

### 1. Teachers Questionnaire English Version

Form # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Teachers Questionnaire

##### Teacher Background

Sex: Male  Female

Age: ..... years

**Education:** less than grade 12  Grade 12  Teacher Training College   
University  Islamic Education (Madrassa)  Private education   
Master Degree

**Teaching Experiences:** ..... (Years)

**Teaching Subject:** Language  Math

**Teaching Class:** Boys  Girls  Mixed

**Teaching grade:** grade 1  grade 2  grade 3  grade 4  grade 5  grade 6

##### Questions

1. Do you use lesson plans in your teaching?  
Yes  Sometimes  Seldom  No
2. If yes or sometimes, why do you make LP? (you can select several options)
  - a) It is my duty
  - b) To save the time
  - c) To vary my methods
  - d) To motivate students to participate
  - e) To show the principal
  - f) To prepare materials
  - g) To organize activities
  - h) To know the objective of the lesson
  - i) To feel professional
  - j) To achieve the goal

- k) To know why I am teaching
  - l) To know what I am teaching
3. If no or seldom, why do you not make LP? (you can select several options)
- a) I have no time
  - b) I have enough experience
  - c) I know what to do
  - d) It is waste of time
  - e) I know why I am teaching
  - f) I know how to teach
  - g) I know my students
  - h) I don't know how to make a LP
4. Do you follow all steps of lesson plan that is written in your plan?
- Completely  To a large extent  To some extent  No
5. Which stage of lesson plan is most important to you?
- a) Introduction and preparation
  - b) Presenting new lesson
  - c) Conclusion
  - d) All
6. Do you use the same format of LPs as other teachers?
- Completely  To a large degree  To some degree  No
7. Do school principal supervise your lesson plans?
- Completely  To a large degree  To some degree  No
8. Do principal monitor your teaching?
- Completely  To a large degree  To some degree  Not at all
9. Do you consult the school principal in case of having problems in preparing and using of LP?
- Often  Sometimes  Never
10. Where do you prepare your lesson plan?
- At home  In School  In both places  I don't prepare LP
11. When do you prepare your LP?
- Several days before  one day before  the same day  I don't prepare LP
12. How you prepare your lesson plan?

Alone  with colleges  with school principal

13. Which of following LPs do you use?

Plans made by your-self  LP according to TTC format  the textbook LP

14. For who do you made LP?

Myself  the principal  school inspector

15. Motivation is often at the initial parts of lesson plans. What kind of motivation do you use?

- a) Ask questions about homework
- b) Silence the class
- c) Ask questions about previous lesson
- d) Write the lesson title on blackboard
- e) Relate to students' experience
- f) Ask students what they know about the new topic
- g) Tell a story or poem related to the lesson
- h) Check the attendance
- i) Other, please specify .....

16. Activities often recommended in LPs. What kind of activities do you use?

- a) Students answer my questions verbally
- b) Students write answers to my questions on black board
- c) Students ask questions from me
- d) Students ask questions from each other
- e) Students work in group
- f) Students work individually
- g) Students read aloud in chorus
- h) Others, please specify.....

17. Group work is often recommended in LP. What is the aim of group work according to you?

- a) To alleviate the teacher's work
- b) To train students in cooperation
- c) To learn students better together
- d) Other, please specify.....

18. What are your views about using lesson plan?

Please explain

.....  
.....

## 2. Teachers Questionnaire Dari Version

نمبر فورم \_\_\_\_\_

### پرسشنامه برای معلم

#### شهرت استاد

جنس:  مرد  زن

عمر:

درجه تحصیل:  12 پاس  14 پاس  تعلیمات اسلامی  خصوصی  لیسانس  ماستر

تجربه کاری:

مضمونی را که تدریس میکنید:  دری  پشتو  انگلیسی  عربی  ریاضی

نوعیت صنف:  ذکور  نسوان  مختلط

صنفی را که تدریس میکنید:  صنف اول  صنف دوم  صنف سوم  صنف چهارم

صنف پنجم  صنف ششم

#### سوالات

1. آیا شما در تدریس تان از پلان درسی استفاده میکنید؟

بلی  بعضی اوقات  ندرتاً  نه

2. اگر بلی یا بعضی اوقات، چرا شما از پلان درسی استفاده میکنید؟ (شما میتوانید چندین گزینه را انتخاب کنید)

(الف) وظیفه من است

(ب) به خاطر استفاده از وقت

(ج) به خاطر متنوع ساختن میتودهای تدریس

(د) به خاطر انگیزه دادن شاگردان

(ه) به خاطر نشان دادن به مدیر مکتب

(و) به خاطر تهیه نمودن مواد درسی

(ز) به خاطر تنظیم نمودن فعالیت ها

(ح) به خاطر دانستن هدف درس

(ط) به خاطر احساس مجرب بودن

(ی) به خاطر رسیدن به هدف

(ک) به خاطر دانستن اینکه چرا تدریس میکنم

(ل) به خاطر دانستن اینکه چه را تدریس میکنم

3. اگر نه یا ندرتاً، چرا شما از پلان درسی استفاده نمی کنید؟ (شما میتوانید چندین گزینه را انتخاب کنید)

(الف) وقت ندارم

(ب) من تجربه کافی دارم

- ج) من میدانم که کدام فعالیتها را انجام دهم  
 د) ضیاع وقت است  
 ه) من میدانم که چطور تدریس کنم  
 و) من شاگردان خود را میشناسم  
 ز) من میدانم که چطور پلان درسی را تهیه کنم

4. آیا شما تمام مراحل را که در پلان درسی تان نوشته میکنید تعقیب میکنید؟

- کاملاً  تا حد زیاد  تا حدی  نه

5. آیا کدام مرحله پلان درسی برای شما مهمترین مرحله است؟

- الف) مرحله مقدماتی و آماده گی  
 ب) مرحله تقدیم درس  
 ج) مرحله جمع آوری و خلاصه ساختن درس  
 د) همه

6. آیا شکل پلان درسی شما و دیگر استادان یکسان میباشد؟

- کاملاً  تا حد زیاد  تا حدی  نه

7. آیا مدیر مکتب پلان درسی تان را نظارت میکند؟

- کاملاً  تا حد زیاد  تا حدی  نه

8. آیا مدیر مکتب تدریس تان را نظارت میکند؟

- کاملاً  تا حد زیاد  تا حدی  نه

9. آیا در صورت مواجه شدن به مشکلات در تهیه و استفاده پلان درسی با مدیر مکتب مشوره میکنید؟

- اکثراً  بعضی اوقات  هرگز نه

10. آیا شما پلان درسی تان را در کجا تهیه میکنید؟

- در خانه  در مکتب  در هر دو جای  من پلان درسی تهیه نمیکنم

11. چه وقت پلان درسی تان را تهیه میکنید؟

- چند روز قبل از تدریس  یک روز قبل از تدریس  همان روز  من پلان درسی تهیه نمیکنم

12. چطور پلان درسی تان را تهیه میکنید؟

- تنها  با همتایان  با مدیر مکتب

13. آیا شما کدام نوع پلان درسی را استفاده میکنید؟

- پلان تهیه شده خود را  پلان درسی مطابق دیزاین دارالمعلمین  پلان کتاب درسی

14. آیا شما پلان درسی را به خاطر چه تهیه میکنید؟

- به خاطر مؤثریت تدریس  به خاطر مدیر مکتب  به خاطر عضو نظارت

15. اکثراً انگیزه یکی از بخش های اساسی پلان درسی میباشد. آیا شما کدام نوع انگیزه را استفاده میکنید؟

- الف) پرسیدن سوالات در مورد کارخانه گی  
ب) خاموش ساختن صنف  
ج) پرسیدن سوالات در مورد درس قبلی  
د) نوشتن عنوان درس بالای تخته  
ه) ربط دادن درس به تجربه شاگردان  
و) پرسیدن از شاگردان در مورد اینکه آنها در مورد درس جدید چه میدانند  
ز) گفتن یک قصه یا شعر در ارتباط با درس  
ح) گرفتن حاضری  
ط) دیگر، لطفاً واضح سازید
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16. در پلان درسی همیشه فعالیت ها گنجانیده میشود. آیا شما کدام نوع فعالیت را استفاده میکنید؟

- الف) شاگردان به طور شفاهی به سوالات جواب میدهند  
ب) شاگردان جواب سوالات را بالای تخته می نویسند  
ج) شاگردان از من سوال میکنند  
د) شاگردان از همدیگر سوال میکنند  
ه) شاگردان کارگروپی میکنند  
و) شاگردان به صورت انفرادی کار میکنند  
ز) شاگردان درس را به صدای بلند میخوانند  
ح) دیگر، لطفاً واضح سازید
- .....

17. کار گروپی اکثراً در پلان درسی گنجانیده میشود. از نظر شما هدف کار گروپی چیست؟

- الف) کاهش دادن کار استاد  
ب) تربیت شاگردان جهت همکاری بایکدیگر  
ج) تا اینکه شاگردان با یکدیگر به صورت بهتر بیاموزند  
د) دیگر، لطفاً واضح سازید
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18. نظر شما در مورد استفاده پلان درسی چیست؟

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