

THE BALANCING ACT OF PLANNING

ELP Conference, Christchurch, May 2010
Marilyn Lewis,
The University of Auckland.

OVERVIEW

- Why do tutors change their planned lessons?
- Ways of changing lesson plans
- Implications of each option
- Encouraging learner autonomy

WHY DO TUTORS CHANGE THEIR PLANNED LESSONS?

What English to teach is one thing but how they want to learn is another. They are hesitant to make any suggestions to me, which leaves me looking for moments when their eyes glaze over as a sign they are losing interest. Then I try doing things differently.

LEARNER-RELATED REASONS

- ❖ Something urgent needs doing
e.g. completing form
- ❖ Homework wasn't done
- ❖ The learner is tired/ distracted/
unmotivated

LESSON-RELATED REASONS

- An activity seems boring/ inappropriate
- The content seems too easy/ difficult
- The tutor miscalculated the timing

Any other reasons?

WHY MIGHT A LEARNER NOT DO 'HOMEWORK'?

Irrelevance

Lack of time

Unclear task

Tutor never gives feedback

Not a priority

WHY ARE SOME LEARNERS PASSIVE?

- The teacher makes all the decisions.
- The tutor is seen as the one who assesses progress.
- Most of the lesson activities are right/wrong exercises.
- Between-lesson tasks are traditional 'homework' exercises.
- The tutor's questions are of the closed type.
- The learners think they don't know enough to ask questions.