

CAP - Context, Analysis, Practice: A lesson planning model for language teacher education

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Given the largely undisputed recognition of the importance of context when helping foreign and second language learners to understand new language (e.g. grammar, functional language, lexis, etc.), it is somewhat strange that none of the three-stage paradigms commonly used in preservice language teacher education (e.g. PPP, ESA, ARC, TTT, etc.) make clear reference to context in their stages. This omission becomes even more apparent when working with global ELT coursebooks, where new language also tends to be introduced through a Context-Analysis-Practice sequence (Anderson, 2017a). Trends in coursebook writing since the late 1990s have tended to favour whole-text contexts, rather than image-based or text-integrated contexts (Anderson, 2017a), meaning that preparatory texts have also become more extensive. This places greater demand on learners' receptive skills (reading and listening) to successfully notice and decode the meaning, form and use of new language. Context, it seems, is more prominent than ever in language teaching.

In light of this, I would like to propose a context-oriented model to help trainee and novice teachers structure new language lessons. The model includes three core stages; Context, Analysis and Practice, with an optional fourth stage, Evaluation, depending on the lesson type. The stages can be remembered using the mnemonics 'CAP' and 'CAPE'. Table 1 describes what may happen in each of the stages.

Table 1: The CAP/CAPE model

Context	The context for learning is established through a text (listening, reading or video), a presented 'situation' (in the classroom or through audio-visual resources), or the involvement of learners. This may be accompanied by activities that raise background schemata, check comprehension, or engage learners meaningfully in the text.
Analysis	Features of the text are noticed and analysed explicitly for meaning, form, pronunciation and usage/use as appropriate. This may include grammatical, functional, lexical or textual aspects of the language.
Practice	Learners practise using the language. This may include controlled and freer practice of the language analysed, scaffolded and independent text construction or a communicative task.
Evaluation (optional)	When practice involves text construction, self-, peer and teacher evaluation of the text are possible.

As indicated by the arrow in Table 1, the Practice and Analysis stages can be reversed (CPA) to reflect emergent approaches to dealing with new language or certain models for task-based learning (e.g. Willis, 1996). Such approaches would not normally endorse the pre-emptive selection of language features, so the focus of the analysis would depend on challenges that emerge during the Practice stage.

The CAP model is initially straightforward and intuitive, echoing skill-learning theory (Fitts, 1964; Anderson, 1983), meaning it is likely to be familiar to trainees from a wide range of backgrounds with different prior experiences of learning (Anderson, 2016). Once users grasp the basic logic of the CAP model, they may begin to complexify it, for example through the addition of the evaluation stage when appropriate, or by experimenting with the reversal of the Analysis and Practice stages. Other modifications are also possible (see: Anderson, 2017a). Initial responses from both novice and

experienced teachers on CELTA and CertTESOL courses where the model has been used have been encouraging:

CAP was very clear, very simple, very useful, easy to retain and I could plan a whole lesson using it. I could categorise all the stages in these three areas ... it also helps as a checklist just to make sure that I'm not missing any big chunk of my lesson.

It provided me with a framework that would help me very much when I came to plan my lessons...

It drew my attention to the kind of activities and tasks I would do with my students because this way I can categorise most tasks according to the stage I want to focus on.

(author's own data)

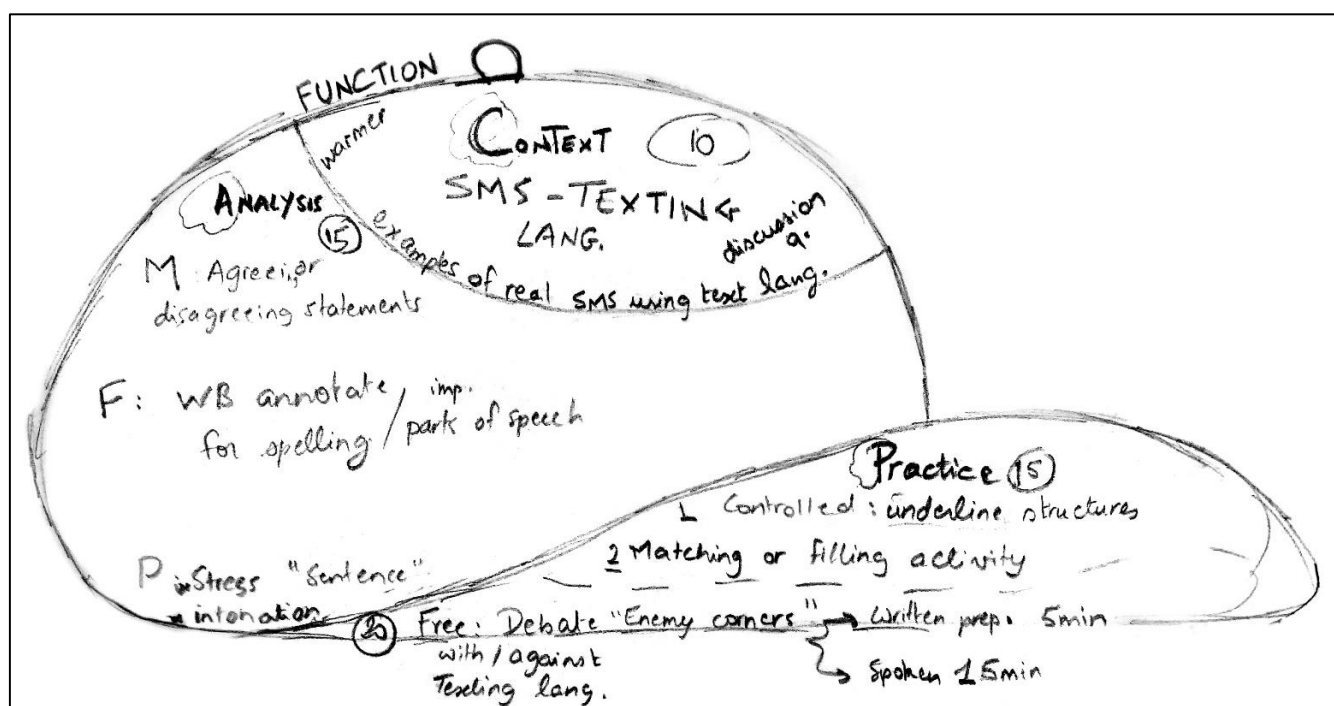
Table 2 (from: Anderson, 2017b; used with permission) shows three simple 'lesson skeletons' using the CAP model and involving a variety of text types and analyses involving grammatical, functional and discursive features. Such simplified skeletons may help trainee and novice teachers both to see commonalities in very different lesson types (when compared), and to produce initial rough drafts of their own lesson plans before fleshing out the details.

Table 2: Example CAP lesson skeletons (from: Anderson, 2017b; used with permission)

C-A-P Phase	Example lesson 1 Intermediate level (B1) Making arrangements by email	Example lesson 2 Upper intermediate level (B2) Telling an anecdote	Example lesson 3 Advanced level (C1) Negotiating a business contract
C – context	Learners read and evaluate two different emails that make arrangements; one is clear and to the point and the other is not so good.	Learners listen to a recording of several friends telling amusing anecdotes from their childhood, and match speakers to topics.	Learners watch a video of a business negotiation from a reality TV show, and answer comprehension questions.
A – analysis	Learners study the structure of the better email, and underline useful expressions and phrases (e.g. How about if...?; Let me know...).	Learners analyse which tenses the speakers used (e.g. past simple, past continuous, etc.) from the tapescript of the recording, and why.	In pairs, learners watch the negotiation again on computers and make notes on effective negotiation techniques and language used.
P – practice	Learners write emails to each other to plan a weekend holiday, and Cc in the teacher.	Learners spend five minutes making notes and then tell anecdotes to each other in small groups.	A role-play in which learners pretend to be buyers and sellers of a new range of computers.

Figure 1 shows a sketch created by a CELTA trainee as part of the lesson planning process, revealing how she used CAP to plan an integrated speaking and writing skills lesson on the topic of SMS/texting language.

Figure 1: A trainee sketch using the CAP model



Because it initially takes a top-down perspective that is conducive to the use of whole texts, the CAP model is potentially able to facilitate the analysis of a wide variety of language features, including productive subskills, discursive features and even genre analysis, as promoted in text-based instruction/language teaching (e.g. Feez, 1998; Burns, 2012). Indeed, a 3-stage teaching/learning cycle, initially proposed by Feez (1998) and reproduced by Thornbury and Slade (2006) for the analysis and teaching of conversation follows a Context-Analysis-Practice order (Table 3). Other types of analysis potentially possible with a CAP model include noticing and awareness-raising of effective practices in intercultural communication and translanguaging.

Table 3: The teaching/learning cycle (from: Feez, 1998: 33; cited in Thornbury and Slade, 2006: 279)

First stage of the cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> activities build knowledge of context of language use which relates to learner needs activities involve visuals, realia, excursions, discussions, field-work and vocabulary-building parallel activities build cross-cultural strategies and pronunciation or spelling skills
Second stage of the cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involves a close investigation of the purpose and structure of a model of a text type which occurs in the context students focus on the register and language features which are central to the text achieving its purpose language features are studied at both whole text and clause level
Third stage of the cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initial activities provide students with opportunities to use the text type with support later activities gradually demand more independent performances

While the CAP model is likely to be of use when supporting the development of trainee and novice teachers, it is important to point out that, like all scaffolding devices, it can (and probably should) be 'removed' when novice teachers have developed the experience, awareness and personal practical knowledge necessary to plan more complex lessons appropriately. Until they have, I offer CAP as a useful tool in their development.

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Jason Anderson is a teacher, teacher educator, consultant, researcher and award-winning author of books and materials for language teachers. He has trained and supported teachers in a wide variety of teaching contexts worldwide. His interests include teaching methodology, multilingualism and teacher education. His latest book, the *Trinity CertTESOL Companion* (Delta Publishing), is due out in spring 2017.

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