

Integrating Meaningful, Mindful, and Joyful Learning in Pedagogical Deep Learning-Based ELT Lesson Plans

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Abstrak: Pedagogical deep learning menjadi orientasi penting dalam ELT/TESOL karena mendorong pembelajaran bahasa untuk bergerak melampaui aktivitas permukaan menuju pemahaman konseptual, keterlibatan reflektif, partisipasi yang bertujuan, dan penggunaan bahasa yang dapat ditransfer ke berbagai konteks. Namun, penelitian sebelumnya cenderung mengkaji meaningful learning, mindful learning, dan joyful learning secara terpisah, sehingga masih terbatas bukti mengenai bagaimana ketiga dimensi tersebut diterjemahkan secara terpadu dalam perencanaan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, khususnya pada keselarasan tujuan, skenario pembelajaran, dan penilaian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pola integrasi meaningful, mindful, dan joyful learning dalam rencana pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, mengidentifikasi ketidakseimbangan dalam desain pembelajaran dan penilaian, serta menjelaskan bentuk penilaian metakognitif yang telah digunakan atau belum digunakan oleh guru. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus jamak kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis enam rencana pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dari jenjang sekolah dasar, sekolah menengah pertama, dan sekolah menengah atas. Analisis dokumen didukung oleh wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan empat guru bahasa Inggris dari tiga sekolah, yang terdiri atas dua guru pemula dengan pengalaman mengajar kurang dari lima tahun dan dua guru berpengalaman dengan masa kerja lebih dari sepuluh tahun. Data dianalisis secara tematik melalui pembacaan berulang, pengodean, analisis dalam kasus, dan perbandingan lintas kasus. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meaningful learning merupakan dimensi yang paling tampak, terutama melalui topik kontekstual dan tugas komunikatif; mindful learning menjadi dimensi terlemah karena penilaian reflektif dan metakognitif masih terbatas; sedangkan joyful learning terintegrasi secara tidak merata, mulai dari partisipasi yang bertujuan hingga aktivitas hiburan yang terlepas dari tujuan pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa deep learning dalam ELT memerlukan keselarasan yang koheren antara konten esensial, tujuan pembelajaran, aktivitas belajar, serta penilaian reflektif atau metakognitif.

Kata kunci: Deep learning, Perencanaan pembelajaran, Meaningful learning, Mindful learning, Joyful learning

Abstract: Pedagogical deep learning has become an important orientation in ELT/TESOL because it encourages language teaching to move beyond surface-level activities toward conceptual understanding, reflective engagement, purposeful participation, and transferable language use. However, previous studies have often examined meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning separately, leaving limited evidence on how these three dimensions are jointly translated into English lesson planning, particularly in the alignment of objectives, instructional scenarios, and assessment. This study aims to analyze the patterns of integration of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning in English lesson plans, identify imbalances in instructional design and assessment, and explain the forms of metacognitive assessment used or not yet used by teachers. Employing a qualitative multiple-case study design, the research analyzed six English lesson plans from elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels. The document analysis was supported by semi-structured interviews with four English teachers from three schools, consisting of two novice teachers with fewer than five years of teaching experience and two experienced teachers with more than ten years of service. The data were analyzed thematically through repeated reading, coding, within-case analysis, and cross-case comparison. The findings show that meaningful learning was the most visible dimension, mainly through contextualized topics and communicative tasks; mindful learning was the weakest dimension because reflective and metacognitive assessment was limited; and joyful learning was unevenly integrated, ranging from

purposeful participation to entertainment detached from learning goals. The study concludes that deep learning in ELT requires coherent alignment among essential content, learning objectives, learning activities, and reflective or metacognitive assessment.

Keywords: Deep learning, Lesson plan, Meaningful learning, Mindful learning, Joyful learning

Submission History:

Submitted: June 17, 2026

Revised: June 29, 2026

Accepted: June 30, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical deep learning has gained increasing attention in contemporary education because it encourages learning that goes beyond content coverage, routine task completion, and surface participation. In this study, pedagogical deep learning is understood not as artificial intelligence or computational deep learning, but as a pedagogical orientation that emphasizes conceptual understanding, purposeful engagement, reflective awareness, and the transfer of learning into meaningful contexts (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025a, 2025b; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014; Fullan et al., 2018). This orientation is particularly relevant to ELT/TESOL because language learning requires more than the memorization of vocabulary, grammar, or text structures. Students need opportunities to use English for communication, interpretation, reflection, and problem solving in contexts that are meaningful to their lives (Yüzlü, 2022; Jumariati et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2025).

Within recent pedagogical discussions, deep learning is often associated with three interrelated dimensions: meaningful learning, mindful learning, and joyful learning. Meaningful learning refers to the connection between learning content, students' experiences, authentic language use, and the possibility of transfer. Mindful learning emphasizes metacognitive awareness, reflection, self-monitoring, and assessment as learning. Joyful learning refers to learning-oriented enjoyment that emerges through purposeful participation, appropriate challenge, confidence, collaboration, and visible progress, rather than entertainment alone (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025a, 2025b; Kaur, 2026; Syilla, 2026; Yan & Mendoza, 2025). In English lesson planning, these three dimensions are important because they show whether teachers can translate deep learning principles into coherent objectives, instructional activities, materials, interactional patterns, and assessment procedures.

Previous studies have contributed valuable insights into deep learning and English language teaching. Some studies have emphasized the importance of communicative competence, learner agency, contextualized pedagogy, and strategic awareness in language education (Jumariati et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2025; Yüzlü, 2022). Other studies have discussed lesson planning and shown that lesson plans may be administratively complete but pedagogically uneven, especially when higher-order learning objectives are not aligned with instructional tasks and assessment procedures (Damayanti, 2020; Hemas, 2021; Tunnadia, 2025). Studies on reflective learning, self-assessment, and metacognition have also shown that students benefit when reflection and assessment as

learning are embedded in classroom practice rather than treated as optional activities (Almarshedi, 2025; Rimun & Yumarnamto, 2024; Yan & Mendoza, 2025). However, these studies tend to examine deep learning principles, lesson planning, or reflective assessment as separate concerns.

This separation indicates an important research gap. Existing studies have often discussed meaningful, mindful, or joyful learning individually, or have focused on teachers' perceptions and general implementation of deep learning without closely examining how the three dimensions are jointly operationalized in actual ELT lesson plans (Syilla, 2026; Tatipang et al., 2026; Waloyo, 2026). In addition, limited attention has been given to the specific points at which imbalance occurs in lesson design, particularly in the relationship among learning objectives, instructional scenarios, and assessment. This gap is significant because deep learning in ELT cannot be evaluated only from the presence of active, enjoyable, or communicative activities. It must also be examined through the coherence of lesson design and the extent to which assessment supports reflection, metacognition, and meaningful language use.

To address this gap, the present study examines the joint integration of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning in six English lesson plans from elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels. The analysis is supported by semi-structured interviews with four English teachers from three schools. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on actual lesson-plan documents as evidence of pedagogical design, rather than merely examining teachers' perceptions or discussing deep learning at a conceptual level. By analyzing instructional scenarios, assessment practices, and metacognitive assessment, this study offers a more focused understanding of how pedagogical deep learning is translated into ELT planning. Its scientific contribution is the development of an analytical lens for evaluating the coherence of English lesson plans through the combined dimensions of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the patterns of integration of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning in ELT lesson plans, identify imbalances in instructional design and assessment, and explain the forms of metacognitive assessment used or not yet used by teachers. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How are meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning integrated in English teachers' lesson plans? (2) In which aspects is the imbalance of integration most visible, particularly in instructional scenarios and assessment? (3) How do teachers design assessment that supports students' metacognition and reflection?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to examine how pedagogical deep learning was translated into English lesson planning across different school contexts. A multiple-case design was appropriate because the study did not aim to measure the statistical effectiveness of lesson plans, but to interpret how meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning were represented, emphasized, or neglected in teachers' instructional designs (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2018). Each lesson plan

was treated as a case of pedagogical design, while cross-case comparison was used to identify recurring patterns, variations, and points of imbalance in the integration of the three learning dimensions. This design enabled the study to examine both the particular characteristics of each lesson plan and the broader patterns that emerged across different school levels and teacher experience categories.

Research Site, Participants, and Lesson Plan Selection

The study was conducted in three purposively selected schools representing the elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels to capture variations in English lesson planning across different student developmental stages, curriculum demands, language proficiency, and instructional complexity. Four English teachers participated through purposive sampling based on their active involvement in lesson planning, availability of relevant lesson-plan documents, and willingness to participate in semi-structured interviews. The participants included two novice teachers (less than five years of experience) and two experienced teachers (more than ten years of experience), enabling the study to explore how teaching experience influenced instructional design. The primary data comprised six English lesson plans selected for their rich representation of diverse learning topics, language skills, instructional activities, and assessment practices. Each lesson plan was analyzed in terms of learning objectives, instructional procedures, learning activities, teaching materials, interaction patterns, assessment, and the integration of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning principles.

Data Sources and Data Collection

Data were collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Document analysis served as the primary data source by examining six English lesson plans as pedagogical documents that reflected teachers' decisions regarding learning objectives, instructional procedures, materials, interaction patterns, assessment, and the integration of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning principles. Semi-structured interviews with the four participating teachers complemented the document analysis by exploring the pedagogical reasoning underlying their instructional design, including topic selection, activity organization, assessment, reflection, and interpretations of pedagogical deep learning. Combining these two data sources enabled triangulation between the written lesson plans and teachers' explanations, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the instructional planning process.

Data Analysis and Coding Procedures

Data were analyzed thematically following the procedures of Braun and Clarke and Nowell et al.. The lesson plans and interview transcripts were first read repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of each case, followed by coding based on the three dimensions of pedagogical deep learning, meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning, along with additional categories related to instructional alignment, assessment, reflection, and design coherence. The coding framework was reviewed collaboratively by the research team using predefined operational indicators to ensure consistency, with any

discrepancies resolved through discussion and re-examination of the data. Finally, within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted to identify recurring patterns, similarities, differences, and design imbalances across the six lesson plans, while triangulating findings from both document analysis and interview data to strengthen the credibility of the results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Integration of Meaningful, Mindful, and Joyful Learning in English Lesson Plans

The analysis of the six English lesson plans revealed that meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning were integrated to varying degrees rather than as a coherent pedagogical framework. Meaningful learning emerged as the most visible dimension across all lesson plans because teachers consistently selected contextual topics, familiar situations, and communicative tasks that related English learning to students' everyday experiences. These contextualized activities encouraged students to use English for practical purposes, such as describing daily routines, giving directions, expressing opinions, creating social media captions, and discussing environmental issues. However, in several cases, meaningful learning remained limited to contextual relevance and did not consistently extend to authentic language transfer, higher-order thinking, or sustained communicative performance.

By contrast, mindful learning was the least developed dimension. Although some lesson plans included brief opportunities for reflection or peer interaction, structured metacognitive practices such as self-assessment, strategy monitoring, peer feedback, and learning reflection were generally limited or absent. Most learning activities emphasized task completion and classroom participation rather than encouraging students to evaluate their own learning process, identify difficulties, or plan future improvement. Consequently, active participation was more evident than reflective engagement across the lesson plans.

Joyful learning appeared in all lesson plans but was implemented unevenly. In several cases, enjoyable learning was represented through games, collaborative activities, creative tasks, and interactive discussions that increased students' participation and motivation. Nevertheless, the quality of joyful learning differed substantially across cases. Some activities primarily functioned as entertaining classroom events, whereas others promoted purposeful collaboration, learner agency, and appropriately challenging tasks that supported meaningful language learning. These findings indicate that joyful learning contributed more effectively to pedagogical deep learning when enjoyment was explicitly connected to instructional objectives rather than treated as an end in itself.

Design Imbalance in Instructional Scenarios and Assessment

The findings further revealed that the greatest imbalance in integrating pedagogical deep learning occurred in the alignment between instructional scenarios and assessment. While most lesson plans successfully incorporated contextual learning activities and communicative interaction, assessment practices frequently remained conventional and

product-oriented. Learning objectives emphasizing authentic communication were often followed by assessments that focused primarily on vocabulary accuracy, worksheet completion, grammar, or final products, resulting in limited alignment between intended learning outcomes and evidence of learning.

The imbalance was also reflected in differences between instructional activities and assessment design. Interactive discussions, collaborative work, and contextual communication were common features of classroom scenarios, yet these activities were rarely accompanied by assessment procedures that captured students' thinking processes, communicative decision-making, or learning development. Consequently, the lesson plans demonstrated stronger coherence in activity design than in assessment design, suggesting that teachers found it easier to create engaging learning experiences than to develop assessment practices consistent with pedagogical deep learning.

Although experienced teachers generally demonstrated stronger instructional coherence than novice teachers, the difference was primarily one of degree rather than kind. Experienced teachers were more likely to integrate peer feedback, revision, and communicative assessment into their lesson plans, whereas novice teachers tended to rely on more traditional assessment formats. Nevertheless, even the strongest lesson plans did not fully establish coherent alignment among learning objectives, instructional activities, and reflective assessment, indicating that design imbalance remained a recurring characteristic across cases.

Assessment Practices Supporting Metacognition and Reflection

The analysis showed that assessment practices supporting students' metacognition and reflection were still limited across the six lesson plans. Most assessments evaluated students' final performance rather than their learning process, with relatively little emphasis on self-monitoring, reflection, or strategic awareness. Opportunities for students to evaluate their own understanding, identify learning difficulties, or regulate subsequent learning were generally absent or only briefly incorporated into classroom activities.

Several lesson plans demonstrated initial efforts to integrate metacognitive assessment through peer feedback, self-assessment, revision, and short reflective prompts. However, these practices were typically implemented as isolated activities rather than as systematic assessment routines embedded throughout the learning process. Reflection often occurred only at the conclusion of a lesson and was rarely followed by explicit goal setting, strategy adjustment, or continuous monitoring of learning progress. As a result, assessment functioned primarily as evidence of learning outcomes rather than as a mechanism for promoting deeper learning.

The interview findings supported this interpretation by indicating that teachers generally recognized the importance of reflection but tended to view it as a brief closing activity instead of a structured metacognitive process. Teachers also acknowledged practical challenges in designing assessment that evaluates students' thinking processes while remaining feasible within classroom time constraints. These findings suggest that strengthening pedagogical deep learning in ELT requires greater emphasis on assessment

as learning, where reflection, self-assessment, peer feedback, and revision become integral components of lesson planning rather than supplementary classroom activities.

Discussion

The overall pattern suggests that the integration of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning is primarily a problem of design coherence. The six lesson plans did not simply show the presence or absence of the three dimensions; rather, they showed different degrees of alignment among objectives, activities, and assessment. Meaningful learning was the most visible because all lesson plans selected relevant, familiar, contextual, or real-life topics. Mindful learning was the weakest because reflection and metacognitive assessment were absent, limited, or only moderately developed. Joyful learning was uneven because enjoyable activities were sometimes connected to learning goals and sometimes remained detached from reflective assessment. This confirms that deep learning in ELT depends not only on active methods, but on coherent relationships among essential content, communicative purpose, learner agency, reflective awareness, and assessment evidence (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014; Fullan et al., 2018; Damayanti, 2020; Tunnadia & Rashid, 2025).

The comparison between novice and experienced teachers also supports this interpretation. The novice-teacher lesson plans, represented by LP 1, LP 3, and LP 5, tended to include familiar topics, games, guessing activities, creativity, or group work, but the assessment components were less coherent with the broader aims of deep learning. LP 1 relied on vocabulary worksheet and oral participation, LP 3 relied on worksheet and short descriptive writing scores, and LP 5 emphasized creativity and neatness. These examples show that novice teachers were able to design lively and relevant activities, but they were less consistent in aligning assessment with reflection, transfer, and metacognitive awareness.

The experienced-teacher lesson plans, represented by LP 2, LP 4, and LP 6, showed stronger coherence between objectives, activities, and assessment. LP 2 connected school-map dialogue with a speaking rubric, LP 4 connected opinion-giving practice with peer feedback and reflection checklist, and LP 6 connected environmental argument writing with peer feedback, revision, and self-assessment. However, experience did not automatically produce strong mindful learning. Even LP 4 and LP 6 were coded as moderate in mindful learning because reflection remained brief and was not developed into sustained metacognitive assessment.

This pattern should not be read as a simple claim that experienced teachers are always better lesson designers. Rather, it suggests that teaching experience may support stronger sequencing, content prioritization, and assessment alignment, while still requiring explicit professional development in reflective and metacognitive assessment. This interpretation is consistent with discussions of teacher readiness which argue that teachers may understand deep learning conceptually but still face challenges in translating it into operational lesson design (Tatipang et al., 2026; Waloyo, 2026). It also aligns with the view that novice teachers may design varied and engaging activities, while experienced teachers may show stronger instructional focus, although both groups may

still need support in embedding sustained reflective assessment (Syilla et al., 2026; Waloyo, 2026).

These findings support the view that pedagogical deep learning in ELT cannot be achieved merely through active methods or attractive classroom activities. A lesson may appear active, communicative, or enjoyable, but still remain shallow if students are not required to transfer understanding, monitor their learning process, revise their work, or reflect on their progress. In this study, the strongest lesson-plan designs were those that connected essential content, communicative purpose, supported participation, feedback, and reflective assessment. This reinforces the argument that deep learning is not a matter of activity selection alone, but of designing coherent learning experiences that connect understanding, application, reflection, and evidence of progress (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014; Fullan et al., 2018; Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025a).

The findings also suggest that lesson planning should be evaluated not only by administrative completeness but also by pedagogical evidence. A strong lesson plan should show what students are expected to understand, how they will use English meaningfully, how they will participate with appropriate challenge, and how they will reflect on their learning process. Without such evidence, claims about meaningful, mindful, or joyful learning remain rhetorical rather than analytical. This is particularly important because previous studies on lesson planning have shown that lesson plans may appear complete at the administrative level while remaining weak in the alignment between higher-order objectives, learning activities, and assessment (Damayanti, 2020; Hemas et al., 2021; Tunnadia & Rashid, 2025).

Therefore, the main contribution of this analysis is the clarification that deep learning-oriented lesson planning requires visible evidence of alignment. Meaningful learning must be supported by authentic application, mindful learning must be supported by reflective assessment, and joyful learning must be supported by purposeful engagement. The imbalance found across the six lesson plans demonstrates that teachers need further support not only in designing activities but also in designing evidence of learning, especially evidence that makes students' thinking, strategies, difficulties, and progress visible.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning were integrated in six English lesson plans developed by four teachers across elementary, junior high school, and senior high school settings. In response to the first research question, the analysis showed that the three dimensions were not integrated evenly. Meaningful learning was the most visible component, typically through contextualized topics and communicative intentions, yet it was not always extended into transfer-oriented performance. With regard to the second question, the greatest imbalance appeared in instructional scenarios and especially in assessment, where innovative or engaging classroom activities were frequently followed by conventional evaluation formats that did not sustain reflective learning. In response to the third question, the study found that

metacognitive assessment was either absent, minimally present, or only partially developed, with stronger examples limited to simple forms of self-assessment, peer feedback, and brief reflective prompts. The study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it supports the view that pedagogical deep learning in ELT should be understood as coherence of design rather than as the mere use of active or student-centered methods. Meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning are most productive when they operate together across objectives, instructional tasks, and assessment. Practically, the study highlights three areas for improvement in lesson planning: clearer prioritization of essential content, stronger integration of assessment as learning, and greater support for teachers in designing reflective and metacognitive assessment routines. These implications are relevant not only for classroom practice but also for teacher education and professional development programs that aim to operationalize deep learning in language teaching. The study is limited by its modest number of cases and by its focus on lesson plans supported by interviews rather than by extended classroom observation. The findings should therefore be read as interpretive insights into design patterns rather than as claims about all ELT contexts. Future research could build on this work by examining a broader range of school settings, following the enactment of lesson plans over repeated classroom observations, and exploring more closely how students respond to assessment formats designed to support metacognition and reflection.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors express sincere gratitude to the participating teachers and schools for providing lesson plan documents and interview information that supported this study. The authors also acknowledge the academic support of the Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, during the development of this article.

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