

A HERMENEUTIC VIEW OF WRITING A LESSON PLAN

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With the traditional view of preparing a lesson one begins with a lesson plan then fills in the phenomenon to be presented within the discipline one is teaching. This accomplished view is used in all presentations introducing phenomena for presentation. This particular view is to make everything concise, consistent and compatible throughout.

Taken to the extreme all curricula in an education institution could use a standard lesson plan. This view keeps things neat, organized and compartmentalized within a single lesson plan. If taken to this extreme it shows the absurdity of it all. In colloquial words, one size does not fit all. Now back to starting with the lesson plan with one discipline. This is supposed to help first year teachers and teachers throughout to organize material. This all makes sense because it is uniform, can be measured and can be a standard to make sure all phenomena presented are clear.

Problematics of this view are that it presupposes that all phenomena can be addressed and presented in the same way even within a given discipline. This is bringing the lesson plan as method to the phenomenon to describe it beforehand for presentation.

Here is an example from the syllabi, on the request for a final presentation, in two courses I teach entitled: Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice; Learning and Teaching.

This will be a 10-minute presentation. This is to be a focused presentation that the presenter is to practice prior to presenting before the class. This presentation is to be a mini presentation on a topic in the discipline that the participant will be teaching. It is to be creative and should have an impact on the audience, so much so, that each person will say, "I learned something" in this presentation. The lesson plan is to be developed in relation to the phenomenon that will be presented. The presenter is not to start with a lesson plan and bring it to the phenomenon. The phenomenon will show its own access to the lesson plan. This means that the lesson plan will emerge from the phenomenon and will be created within the elucidation of the phenomenon. A lesson plan will be presented to the instructor on this selected theme that has first been approved by the instructor. This lesson plan is to be presented to the instructor prior to presentation. Presentations are to be extemporaneous and are not to be read. Presentations will be in the last class meeting.

In colloquial words, to be creative is to go beyond and to break through present boundaries. This can threaten existing ways of doing things.

The problem is that the standard lesson is almost useless for teaching major concepts and engaging students in problem solving, reflection, creative expression, cooperative interaction, or intellectual discernment.¹

After writing out the phenomenon to be taught one can now consider certain themes that are basic to a lesson plan: Objectives; Standards; Procedures; Assessment; Accommodations; Materials. The problematic is that the phenomenon does not always fit into a specific method. When the method precedes the phenomenon and if the phenomenon does not fit into the lesson plan the phenomenon has to be reduced to it. Put succinctly, the method precedes existence of the phenomenon.

With a hermeneutic approach the phenomenon shows its own access. In teaching this is not a method-oriented approach it is a subject-oriented approach. Put succinctly, the phenomenon will show its own access to the lesson plan.

One participant in a class that I taught made this comment after using a hermeneutic approach first then writing a lesson plan:

I thought this presentation was great! I had a good time figuring out how I like to teach and then deciding how I would make a lesson plan. I truly enjoyed planning for the presentation and presenting it. I also really liked seeing everyone else's and participating in their presentations. I can't wait to do it again!²

Notes

- 1) Nell Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in School: An Alternative Approach to Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), p. 9.
- 2) Comment from Andrea Fredrickson 3/1/07 after using a hermeneutic approach elucidating the phenomenon and then writing a lesson plan guided by the phenomenon.

COMMENTARY ON:
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Omar S. Alattas

“The lesson plan is to be developed in relation to the phenomenon that will be presented. The presenter is not to start with a lesson plan and bring it to the phenomenon. The phenomenon will show its own access to the lesson plan”

In response to the above excerpt from the article this is what stood out for me:

- 1) Attacking the issue itself face to face in its core.
- 2) Understanding the hermeneutical meaning of the issue “not just your interpretation of it” by understanding how the issue presents itself from itself, then, you come up with the solution.
- 3) Going with the flow intuitively (Eastern view) rather than interrupting the presentation of the phenomenon cognitively (Western view).
- 4) Tackling the issue intuitively as when intuition is the ground which cognition, interpretation and understanding rises from.