

Lesson Planning : A Boon Or A Curse

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Abstract

Lesson Planning : A boon or a curse is visualized from the perspective of the difficulties faced by student teachers while writing lesson plans. Most student teachers consider it a worthless exercise. A study was designed to understand the difficulties faced by student teachers in few aspects of the lesson plan. It was found that student teachers did face difficulties in writing their lesson plans when it came to set induction, integrating the core components, developing questions and analogies. Student teachers were demotivated with coaching as they were not allowed to vent their creativity. All these aspects make lesson plans a curse for student teachers. The paper offers several suggestions to convert lesson plans to a boon for teacher educators and student teachers thus affect the quality of delivery in the classroom.

Introduction: Lesson planning is an important aspect of the practice teaching program in colleges of education. Planning is important in order to deliver a good lesson in congruence with the objectives designed. According to Nelson L. Bossing, "Lesson Planning is the title given to a statement of achievements to be realized and the specific means by which these are to be attained as a result of the activities engaged in day by day under a teacher". What is a lesson plan? A lesson plan indicates the aims to be realized by teaching a lesson, the methods to be employed and the activities to be undertaken in the class. The different steps of planning a lesson are: select the most appropriate aim for the lesson, provide illustrative materials available, include critical questions, consider the level of the ability and interests of the pupils, consult courses of study and grade requirements, select the best procedures, tie the lesson with previous knowledge and include an appropriate assignment. In order to make an effective lesson plan it is important that the pupils consider reference materials to support and develop the textual matter. They are encouraged to arrange the topics and activities in a logical manner and provide adequate summaries. Most colleges have a fixed format of the lesson plan. This allows for standardization and better evaluation.

Rationale of the study: A lesson is a rudder for an effective interaction in the class and a smooth curriculum transaction. A teacher prepares herself with the objectives and knows her teaching and evaluation strategies. A systematic presentation in a fixed time is expected from the student teachers doing the B.Ed. course. Much time of the B.Ed. time table is allocated for the coaching of lesson plans. Teacher educators are trained and equipped to handle the student teachers and motivate them to develop a better understanding of the content and also apply their knowledge. The study has been undertaken as an action research project along with a B.Ed. student. Since lesson

planning has always been the backbone of any B.Ed. program a study thus was conducted to study the problems faced by the B.Ed. students while making a lesson plan.

Statement of the problem:A study of the difficulties faced by the B.Ed. students while making a lesson plan.

Operational Definitions:

Lesson plan: A teaching outline of the important parts of a lesson arranged in an order in which they are to be presented. It may include the objectives and all the stages of the lesson.

Difficulty faced: The difficulty here is looked at from the aspect of the obstacles faced during the process of making a lesson plan for the practice teaching programme.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify the difficulties faced by the student teachers while writing objectives and specifications.
2. To find out the difficulties faced by the student teachers while writing the set induction.
3. To identify the difficulties faced by the student teachers while writing the questions and analogies included in the lesson plan.
4. To find out the difficulties faced by the student teachers while writing the core components for the lesson.
5. To find out the difficulties faced by the student teachers while preparing the teaching aids for the lesson.
6. To find out the difficulties faced while incorporating the coach's ideas in the lesson plan.

Methodology, Sample and Tools used for the study : Descriptive methodology was used in the study, where a questionnaire was prepared containing the statements related to the objectives of the study. The sample for the study were 30 student teachers, selected through the random sampling technique. The students were briefed on the study and were administered the questionnaire accompanied by an informal interview to collect soft data.

Analysis of data:

Objective 1: None of the students expressed their difficulty in writing objectives and specifications for the lesson.

Objective 2: It was found that 93% of the student teachers find it difficult to come up with the set induction of the lesson. If the student teachers are unable to start writing the lesson plan how will they write other parts of the lesson. Student teachers rally admitted that they have several peer to peer discussions among the subject groups to develop ideas for set induction.

Objective 3: Around 10% of the student teachers found it easy to develop questions and analogies for the lesson plan, that leaves 90% of the student teachers who find it difficult

to do so. The power to imagine and visualize has to be developed in the student teachers in order to achieve this ability.

Objective 4: The NPE 1986 has suggested certain core components which has to be incorporated in the lesson. Student teachers are encouraged to link these core components in the lesson. Most student teachers find it difficult to plug the content matter to the core component thus integration of the core component to the lesson becomes difficult.

Objective 5: 33% of the student teachers admitted that they spend a lot of time making the teaching aids for the lesson, whereas the remaining 67% of them stated that they resort to readymade and internet based teaching aids.

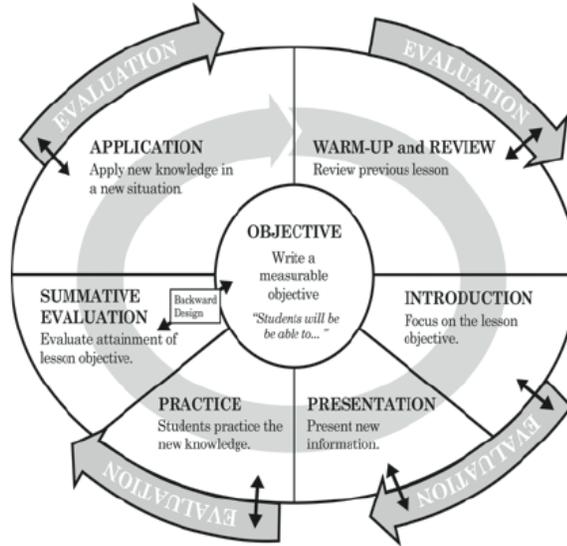
Objective 6: 50% of the students found it difficult to incorporate the coach's ideas into their lesson plans. Most of them seem to be quite resourceful as they said that the coach's ideas interfered with their own creativity.

Findings and Conclusions of the study:

The study revealed that most student teachers have difficulties in writing lesson plans mostly in the areas of set induction, questions and analogies, creating teaching aids and incorporating the coach's ideas. Although we said that the fixed format of the lesson plan is a good idea and fosters transparency and standardization, it is difficult to tell that whether it is the best idea for developing excellence. Most student teachers are stressed when it comes to writing of the lesson plan.

The whole process of making of a lesson plan and getting it coached and supervised is a ritual which all student teachers are supposed to follow, but are we killing creativity in the whole process is a question we teacher educators need to ask ourselves. Do we need the student teachers to actually produce a blue print of their lesson in the format that we have given them? We need to take the middle path by offering flexibility here and accept even lesson notes if possible, ultimately the delivery is important than the written record. How will teacher educators help the student teacher to give effective lessons? Most of the time it is seen that there is very less correlation between the lesson written and the lesson delivered. Why is this happening? We are dynamic individuals and we develop new ideas all the time. In a creative activity like teaching the lesson plan cannot be produced verbatim. The Planning wheel developed by TEAL centre staff can help a great deal in the planning process.

Figure 1. Planning Wheel



Overall considering the production of analogies and questions for the lesson, it is the lifeline of any lesson. If student teachers are facing a difficulty in achieving this, it is most possible that their higher mental abilities need to be developed. It also means that the student teacher has not dwelt and soaked in the content enough to achieve this stage. Most student teachers often think that their job is to teach the content and come out of the class fully satisfied if the students know the content matter but B.Ed. colleges teach them that values are very much a part of the content. The NPE thus forces the teachers to integrate every lesson with the core components which are a set of values. Unless the student teachers affectively connect with the content, they will never be able to plug the content with the core component. We must insist on amalgamating values in our lessons.

Some of the student teachers consider the coaches who guide them as a hindrance. These students would be the ones who already have teaching experience or who have set ideas about the way a particular content need to be tackled. The coach comes with a lot of experience about the content and wants to enhance the lesson with a lot of creative ideas to enable the student teacher to transact the lesson with a lot of ease and joy. This has to be clear to all the students and a collaborative approach must be considered here to develop the best possible lesson for the given time. The coach's attitude must be democratic and giving in nature. A learning time is what we expect with the coaching time that is allotted.

In conclusion it must be considered that in the training period it is wise to write a lesson plan, but efforts must be seen to unleash the creative power of the student teachers in the whole process. Some institutions also grade the lesson plan in order to motivate the student teacher. This could be a good idea, but slowly the student teacher must be able to rise higher and consider the importance of writing a lesson plan even when it is not linked to marks.

Suggestions arising out of the study: The colleges of education must identify the sub skills required to write a lesson plan and develop those skills in the students as a

supportive program. The sub skills which could be developed are skill of written expression, imaginative ability, ability to connect the units that is to correlate, skill of writing questions, skill of plugging content to core values, develop interpersonal skills, understanding creativity.

The college of education only introduces the format of the lesson plan and then imposes it on to the student teachers. Student teachers somehow get the idea that writing the lesson plan is a wasteful activity and the more important activity is the delivery of the lesson. So these student teachers need to be made aware of the importance of the lesson plan and be motivated towards effective writing of the lesson plan. Teacher educators must produce sample lesson plans of every method and give it to the student teachers for reference.

Most important lesson plans must enable student teachers to visualize the challenges that they will face and help them to analyse the content well for better transaction in class. Lesson plans are an aid to student teachers whenever they are lost with the process of presentation of the content. They are objective units for evaluation and the supervisor can also place their expectations in perspective. Lesson plans also provide a sense of preparedness for the student teacher and gives the extent of a lesson. When it comes to time management it helps a great deal. So it is safe to say that lesson plans are a boon rather than a curse due to its several advantages, it is upto the student teacher to use it.

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