

GOOD LESSON PLAN: THE TEACHER'S ROAD MAP TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING

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Abstract

The paper examined good lesson plan: The teacher's road map to effective teaching. The concept of good lesson plan; features of a good lesson plan; who makes the lesson plan; importance of a lesson plan; problems encountered while making a lesson plan which were discussed under:- what am I going to teach (lack of teacher's expertise on the subject matter); who am I planning to teach (lack of good knowledge of the learner) among others were highlighted and discussed. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among others that: during interview for recruitment of teachers, there should be a written phase where those to be recruited will be asked to write a lesson plan with which they will be assessed and employed; teachers should endeavour to be friendly with their students so as to be able to have a good knowledge of them.

Planning is very vital for the successful accomplishment of any vital task. Planning is the systematic process of deciding what and how to accomplish your desire/aim. All teachers need to make wise decisions about the strategies and methods they will employ to help students move systematically towards learning goals. A good planning enables the teacher to predict the course of events during instruction. It is imperative that a teacher must have a planned line of action. The main aim of teaching is to facilitate learning and so adequate planning needs to be done prior to the teaching proper.

Therefore, the teacher needs a good lesson plan in order to teach effectively, he/she needs to establish the exact scope of content to

focus on and how to teach that content, so as to achieve the stated objectives (Kanno, 1997). The paper will be discussed under the following sub-headings:

1. Concept of good lesson plan
2. Features of a good lesson plan
3. Who makes the lesson plan
4. Problems encountered while making the lesson plan
5. Importance of good lesson plan
6. Conclusion
7. Recommendations

Concept of Good Lesson Plan

The lesson plan is derived from the unit plan and it is a detailed, planned and systematic arrangement of what is to be taught by the teacher in a particular lesson period. A good lesson plan can be described as a systematic organization of a content of a unit of a course both in scope and in sequence in such a way that it would guide the teacher to teach effectively and efficiently. Nnaka (1990: 75) in Afurobi (2009), defined a good lesson plan as a detailed plan of instruction which specifies the subject matter and learning experience which will be delivered to a target group within a given lesson period. Also Mbakwem (2001:14), defined it as a "systematic arrangement or organization on paper, of the behavioural objectives to be pursued and attained, the content and learning experiences", to be presented and the "evaluation of the extent of desired changes in the behaviour of the learners", to be accomplished. A good lesson plan will help direct the teacher a right in doing his teaching work. Izuagba (2004), saw a good lesson plan as a detailed, planned and

systematic presentation on paper of how the teacher wishes to teach. What he wants to teach in a particular lesson period. She went further to state that the teacher specifies the behavioural objectives sought, the learning materials, activities he/she and the learner's wish to engage in and the evaluative techniques to be used to determine if the objectives will be achieved without ambiguity.

In the bid to illustrate for clearer understanding, Izuagba went further to state that in preparing a good lesson plan, the classroom teacher provides a highly and philosophical answers to the following questions:

- a. What am I going to teach?
- b. Who am I planning the lesson for?
- c. Why do I want to teach the lesson?
- d. How will I ensure that the objectives are realized?

A. What am I going to teach?:- This refers to the subject and the subject matter or the topic. It is taken from the unit plan, it should not be too broad, given the time allotted for the lesson. Here, the teacher reads it up very well to be confident and also have mastery of the subject matter. The teacher teaches from simple to complex, concrete to abstract.

B. Who am I planning the lesson for?: The answer to this question is the learner. The teacher should also know who the learner is, his/her characteristics in order to work/fashion the lesson based on the learners ability and capability, level, need and interest.

Some of the features of the learner to take into consideration are:-

- i. The class he/she is in
- ii. His/her age (mental and chronological)
- iii. His/her ability, capability, needs, interests.
- iv. Sex (or sex composition of group)

- v. Entry behaviour
- vi. Socio-economic background
- vii. Attitude and motivation

C. Why do I want to teach the lesson?:- The answer here, refers to the instructional objectives which are clearly stated using action verbs. This specify the kind of learning outcomes the teacher expects from the learners at the end of the instruction/lesson. This enables the teacher employ the right methods, materials for effective and efficient instruction.

D. How will I ensure that the objectives are realized?:- When the teacher must have got the right answers to the above questions, the teacher then writes a good lesson plan in a way that any other teacher can teach with understanding with the aid of that same lesson note/plan in his/her absence.

Features of a Good Lesson Plan

Feature means a distinctive characteristic, special or prominent article for which something is known for (Hornby, 2010). Ughamadu (2006:153) basically divided the features of a lesson plan into four major phases:-

1. The revision phase
2. The introductory phase
3. The development phase
4. The evaluation phase

Izuagba (2004:118) divided the lesson plan into three major phases which are:-

1. The introduction
2. The body
3. The conclusion

1. The introduction:- The teacher alerts the learners on entering the classroom. He makes them anxious to receive the lesson by:-

- i. The use of anecdote relevant to the subject matter:- She uses stories to illustrate what is to be taught, for example:- one drawing beans and goat as a kind of listening things to buy can illustrate the discussion on "importance of being literate" an essay topic
 - ii. The use of illustrations and questioning:- The teacher enters the class, staggering and sits down, which might mean or illustrate weakness and so one needs rest after the days work, when she/he might have grown weak.
 - iii. The teacher recalling and summarizing the previous lessons.
2. **The body of the lesson:-** This gradually exposes the learner to the subject matter. The teacher uses the learners prior knowledge to gradually develop the topic. It is presented in steps and are interrelated and elaborately discussed and understood by the learner. The teacher employs different methods, materials and stimuli here and at the same time formally evaluates them to ensure steady progress.
3. **The conclusion:-** This is the last phase in the lesson plan. Here, the teacher could summarize the lesson drawing the learners attention to the silent points discussed. He could also use series of questions which the students will answer in such a way that they summarize the lesson. He could also administer a test to the learners to determine if the objectives have been achieved. He could equally dictate or write notes for them to copy.

There are also other salient features that must be present in a good lesson plan and they include:- subject, topic, class, duration, average age of the learners, entry behaviour, set induction, instructional materials, instructional

procedure, teaching skills, teachers' performance activities, students performance activities, evaluation and closure. All these features are found within the phases listed earlier.

Who makes the lesson plan? One of the primary roles of a teacher is that of a designer and implementer of instruction. Teachers at every level prepare plans that aid in the organization and delivery of their daily services and daily tasks. All teachers need to make wise decisions about the strategies and methods they will employ to help their students more systematically towards learning goals/objectives. Teachers need to be proficient in skills and knowledge of a particular discipline to be able to prepare effective, efficient and good lesson plan. An effective teacher needs to develop a plan to provide direction towards the attainment of the selected objectives. This means that, the more organized a teacher is, the more effective the teaching and the learning is. In summary, writing daily lesson plan or weekly plan is a large part of being organized. This daily/weekly lesson plan provides a guide for managing the learning environment and is essential if a substitute teacher is to be effective and efficient. A teacher must plan his/her lesson if that lesson should be successful. In other words, every devoted teacher should draw his/her lesson plan before he/she starts teaching any concept to the learners.

Problems Encountered While Making the Lesson Plan

These problems will be discussed under the following questions a teacher needs to provide highly and philosophical answers to, when making a lesson plan, thus:

- i. What am I going to teach?
- ii. Who am I planning the lesson for?
- iii. Why do I want to teach the lesson?
- iv. How will I ensure that the objectives are realized?

- i. **What am I going to teach?:-** As discussed earlier, this refers to the subject and the subject matter or the topic and that the lesson plan is drawn from the unit plan. Most teachers get confused along the line and most atimes, do not know what to teach. This is as a result of indecision on the subject or topic to teach. This makes the teacher unprepared for the lesson since he waits until he finds himself in the class to teach. Again, lack of teacher's expertise makes the teacher not to know what to teach in that he does not know where to draw his lesson plan from. This also leads to non-sequence in the delivery of the lessons. It is important that the lesson should be taught in a sequential or chronological order so that the learners will observe/feel the interrelatedness of the topics for clearer understanding.
- ii. **Who am I planning the lesson for?:-** The answer to this, is the learners but most teachers do not have good knowledge of their learners. That is, he does not know their characteristics which will help him fashion his lesson based on the learners ability and capability, level, need and interest. He/she will not be able to present the subject matter and materials in such a way as to motivate his/her students to learn. He/she will not be able to encourage his learners to excel in academics. Since he/she does not know his/her learners, there is a tendency that she/he will derail in lesson planning.
- iii. **Why do I want to teach the lesson:-** The answer here is the instructional objectives which should be clearly stated and also cover the three domains of education. For most teachers the rationale for teaching are defeated in that the instructional objectives stated are not comprehensive. This means that, they do not cover both the
 - a. Cognitive domain:- That is the development of the intellect and mental ability.
 - b. Affective domain:- It deals with changes in learners attitude and feelings.
 - c. Psychomotor domain:- This deals with the development of the motor skills like movement of the hands, the legs , the neck and other parts of the body.
- iv. **How will I ensure that the objectives are realized?:-** This means employing the right method, techniques, approaches, materials and evaluation techniques. Once a teacher derails from the three above, there is no way he will employ the appropriate methods, techniques approaches and evaluation techniques that will help him/her ensure the realization of the objectives. Finally, in his absence, his learners will be marginalized because there is nothing to lay hands upon, so as to carry them along to cover the vaccum. Nothing serves as a roadmap in his absence.

Importance of Good Lesson Plan

The importance of a good lesson plan is very clear and obvious when one compares the effectiveness of a teacher who used a lesson plan to that of a teacher who did not. The good lesson plan is very vital to the teacher's task and that is why it is regarded as his roadmap to effective teaching. Its importance according to Izuagba (2004) includes:-

1. Information, facts and activities should be put down logically for the memory alone may disappoint or recalling may not be effective.
2. It enables the teacher to teach confidently. References may be made to it once in a while to avoid omission of salient points.
3. The teacher may derail from the objectives of the lesson without a lesson plan.

4. It helps to minimize classroom management problems as it specifies what to teach, who and how, techniques, materials and methods.
5. Enables supervisors assess effectiveness of the teacher on his job.
6. Vacuum is not created, since another teacher can use that same plan done by a different teacher.
7. It ensures that lessons are systematically organized and learning time maximized.
3. There should be orientation and re-orientation and supervision of the teacher's lesson plan by the appropriate authority to ensure its comprehensiveness. This is to make sure that none of the three educational domains were neglected, be it cognitive, affective or psychomotor.
4. Teachers should endeavour to employ the appropriate methods, techniques, approaches, materials and evaluative measures and teaching skills to make sure that the comprehensive objectives are being achieved.

Conclusion

The paper has x-rayed a good lesson plan as the teacher's road map to effective teaching and learning.

Again, a good lesson plan equips, directs and aids the teacher to the attainment of the stated instructional objectives and helps him/her provide answers to such questions as what do I teach, to who, how and the techniques, materials and methods to employ.

Recommendations

The recommendations will be based on the problems above thus:-

1. The problem of what to teach comes as a result of lack of expertise on the part of the teachers. This implies that during interview, there should be a written phase conducted for the teachers' to be recruited. Here, they will be asked to write a lesson plan/note with which they will be assessed.
2. The teachers should endeavour and at the same time make it a duty to be in good relationship with their learners so as to be able to have good knowledge of them, so as to be able to fashion their lesson plans based on the learners' ability, capability, level, need and interest for this will help encourage and motivate his/her learners.

5. From time to time, there should be well organized seminars, conferences and workshops to re-activate the teachers once again incase they have forgotten.
6. Teachers themselves should also go for in-service training to remain focused.

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