

CHAPTER 2

THE LESSON STRUCTURE AND THE PLACE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ORDERING WITHIN IT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The sense and aim of ordering learning material is that this is the only way the true significance, unique nature, and scientific construction of a theme can be fully realized. In a teaching event, only ordered learning content can contribute to unlocking reality categorically for a child and, in doing so, form and change him/her. Thus, the question of ordering learning content only arises in a lesson event. Any prior planning and ordering of learning material only occurs because of a teacher's anticipations and earlier experiences in implementing similar principles of ordering in lesson situations (subjects). However, *accountable planning* can only occur in terms of principles which have been didactically evaluated and described. Ordering content according to one or another principle of ordering contributes separately and jointly to helping ensure the eventual success of an entire teaching event.

To acquire clarity about the place and value of ordering learning material, it is necessary, beforehand, to have a clear image of the lesson situation. The constitutive parts of what are essential to the lesson situation must be disclosed before one can order learning content insightfully and meaningfully. Questions arising from this, and which must be answered, are the following:

- i) When is a situation a "formal" teaching situation?
- ii) Is there a distinction between teaching in an "original" and in a "reconstituted" situation?
- iii) What are the essentials of a lesson situation, or what being-structures can be distinguished in the lesson situation?
- iv) What aspects of the lesson structure are of relevance for ordering learning material?

- v) What relations are there among ordering the learning material and, e.g., the ground-forms, didactic categories, didactic criteria, etc.?

To be able to answer these questions, the lesson structure is explored and analyzed thoroughly.

2.2 THE LESSON SITUATION AS FORMAL TEACHING SITUATION IN DIDACTIC PERSPECTIVE

Pedagogics has its point of departure in the primordial [i.e., family] phenomenon of educating itself. In the phenomenon of educating, there is an inseparable unity between educating and teaching. Here, the meaning of teaching is in educating, and the one cannot be realized [educatively] without the other. The primary aim of a parent, and later a teacher, is to bring about a “particular” change in a child through educating and teaching him/her. This change is realized by a child learning to know norms, values, dispositions, cultural content, social codes, skills, and scientific structures, and accepting and being unconditionally obedient to them. For this aim, a school is established because a parent does not possess complete, systematic, and formal knowledge of cultural content and formative systems into which a child must increasingly venture. In a school, there is teaching in more formal, organized, and planned ways. Thus, it is only in a school where a lesson situation is primary. This is not to claim that there is formal teaching only in a school. Each parent also can purposefully and formally teach his/her child. However, the important question is where the boundary is between didactically accountable or formal teaching and spontaneous, haphazard, or intuitive teaching (educating). Here it is stated that a formal teaching situation, as a second order [or reconstituted] lesson situation, should never be elevated to the situation which serves as the primary point of departure for reflecting about *didaskhein*. A didactician has only one common point of departure for reflecting on the question of “teaching”, i.e., the phenomenon of teaching as it appears in the spontaneous lifeworld of persons.⁸ From the insights gained from reflecting on the event in the original [educative] situation, a didactician now can look for points of

⁸ Van der Stoep, F., *Didaktiese Grondvorme*, p. 6.

departure and principles to realize as he/she now plans for situations reconstituted in a school.

2.3 THE ESSENCES OF THE LESSON STRUCTURE

In each lesson situation there is a being-relationship, but also a difference in level (distance) between an adult who understand and knows, and a child who does not understand and know. A child always has the lifeworld of an adult as his/her destination and task. Immediately, this implies that a child, in his/her relatedness and being bound to the lifeworld of an adult, also is a task for an adult because he/she must “transport” a child from the world of a child to his/her [adult] world.⁹ In a lesson situation, this task of an adult is realized directly. Therefore, an adult purposefully and confidently must design a lesson situation. The necessity for this is that a didactician must analyze and learn to know the being-structure of didactic situations so that his/her planning is no longer haphazard.

Now the concept being-structure is elucidated more closely from a didactic-pedagogical perspective.

2.3.1 The meaning of the word “structure”

The word structure is traced to its Latin root, *structura*, and the verb, *struere*, which mean “construct”. All Latin words with the ending *-ura* refer to an activity which is carried out. Thus, “structure” refers to an activity or event by which there is a working through to an assembled whole or unity. This refers to an activity in which an assembled whole is constructed from separate parts of reality.

2.3.2 The concept “being-structure”

From the above, the concept “being-structure” is explicated. When there is mention of “structure”, an aspect of reality is broached. The structure of each slice of reality is that aspect which is a constituent of and unique to it, i.e., without which that reality

⁹ Gous, S.J., *Die skool as weg tot wereldontwerp in didaktiese-pedagogiese perspektief*, p. 8.

cannot figure forth or be. In other words, when there is reference to the structure of a reality, this means those aspects of that reality which are preconditions for its being-there (thus, essence or *being*). This structure is the being-structure of that reality. There are seven ways by which a structure is knowable as a being-structure.¹⁰

A being-structure is a general rule. For example, we can ask: “Which structures make it possible for a situation to figure as a didactic situation, or as a lesson situation?”

A being-structure is a constitutive unity. In other words, it is that part of a reality without which a particular perspective on it cannot be imagined, e.g., the lesson situation. A being-structure is characterized by its being necessary for the existence of the phenomenon (situation). This being-structure answers the question of what realities exclusively belong to the lesson situation and make it what it is.

A being-structure is a precondition. A precondition is something which must be present before something else (for example, the lesson situation) can exist or be brought about. Therefore, it serves as a foundation or basis for the constitution of a matter. The being-structure is a requirement for the lesson structure, but also it is a demand.

A being-structure is a particular carrier of meaning. Here “Particular” indicates that, if such a being-structure can be thought away or is dealt with as if it didn’t exist, everything which was built up earlier (e.g., educating or a lesson) regarding the being-structure no longer can be valid.

A being-structure is a real essence, i.e., something which is (exists) and which essentially belongs to that of which it is an essence. We illustrate this with the question: What makes this situation a lesson situation? To answer this question, there must be a search for what is generally valid and necessary for all authentic lesson situations. Landman further refines the essences to authentic knowing-structures. This means that finding and understanding essences,

¹⁰ Landman, W.A., *Die Opvoedingsituasie*, pp. 2-4.

also in planning a lesson, are preconditions for understanding a lesson situation.

A being-structure is obvious; it shows itself as evident, indisputable, and inevitable. The obvious must serve as a fixed ground for further thought structures. The essences lived experienced in the lesson situation must be disclosed, otherwise the lesson event cannot be understood.

A being-structure is lived experienceable. “This is to say, it is what is lived experienced by a scientist as indisputably and inevitably embedded in the total life, and that life also is present in it”.¹¹ Being-structure is what is experienced in thinking and observing. Because it brings the lesson event into motion and gives form to it, a teacher’s presentation cannot be near to life without it. Landman further indicates, phenomenologically, that being-structures can only be clarified by thinking. If the being-structures are not actualized, neither is the didactic situation.¹²

2.3.3 Disclosing the being-structure in a lesson situation

A structure can only be unveiled phenomenologically as a being-structure of a certain matter or event. Thus, the structure of the ground-forms shows itself as a being-structure of a teaching event because the ground-forms:

- i) make it possible for a didactic event to come into motion (appear),
- ii) are constitutive of a didactic event,
- iii) are preconditions for a didactic event,
- iv) are particular carriers of the meaning of a didactic event,
- v) are a real essence of a didactic event,
- vi) are an obvious in a didactic event,
- vii) can be lived experienced.

Similarly, the following matters also figure as being-structures for each formal teaching situation:

¹¹ Landman, W.A., op. cit., p. 4.

¹² Landman, W.A., op. cit., p. 5.

- i) A categorical structure.
- ii) An aim structure.
- iii) A criterial structure.
- iv) A content structure.
- v) A structure of the ground-forms.
- vi) A planning structure.

Now a schematic overview is given of the essential-structure of a lesson situation in connection with the essence-structure of teaching in the original experience.

From the above, it now is the task of a didactician, as scientist, to elevate these interactions and meanings of the being-structures to the level of insight and order. However, this scientific work also is necessary for meaningfully reconstituting a [school] lesson situation. For this reason, the ontological questioning of a lesson situation phenomenologically is necessary to arrive at being-structures and their resulting meaningfulness. Thus, we see that the sense-structures also are being-structures which are disclosed as real essences, from which the essentials become understood by unveiling and opening thinking activities and from which their “for what” [purpose] is clarified.¹³

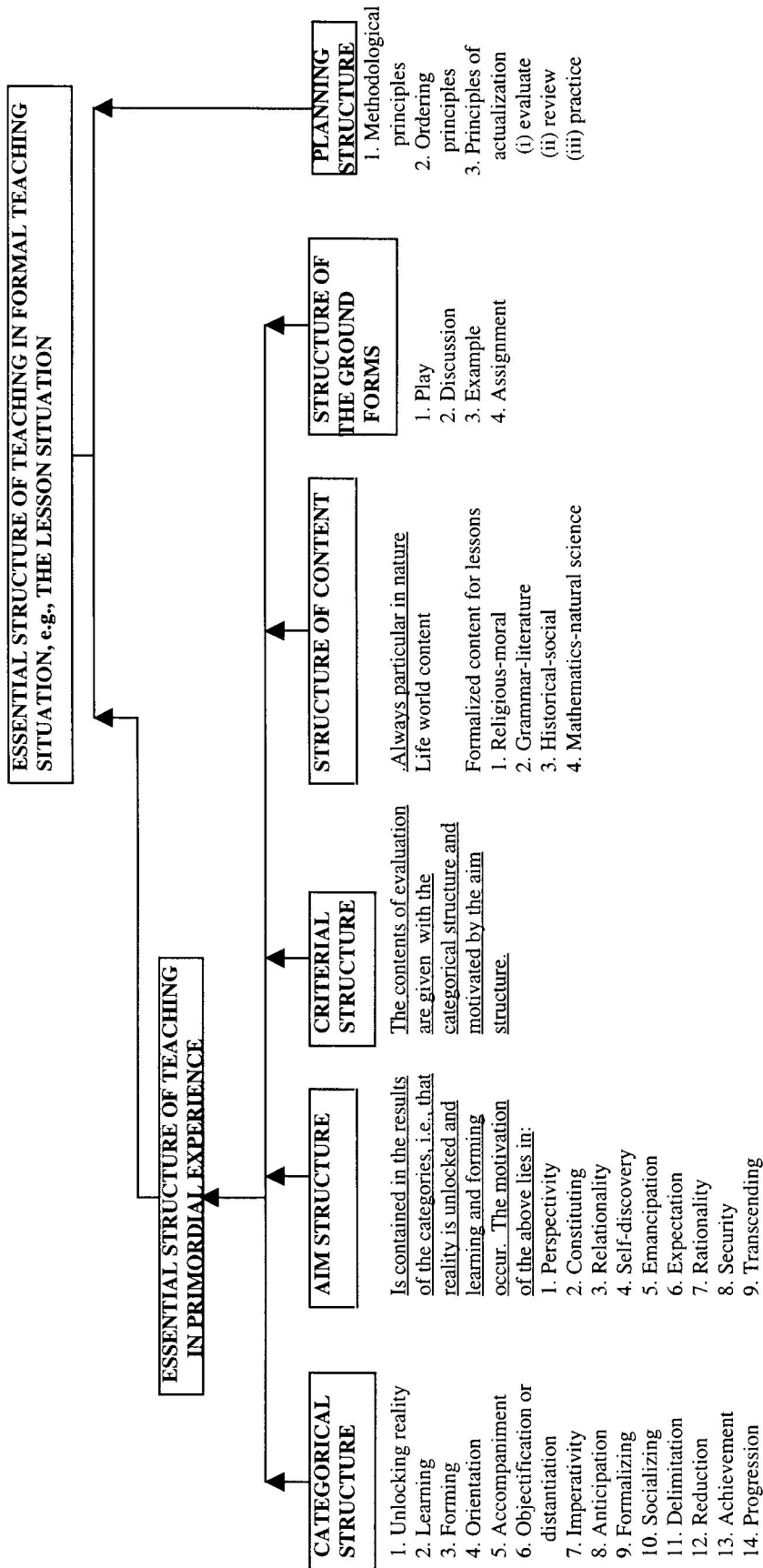
2.4 THE SENSE OF THE BEING-STRUCTURES IN A LESSON SITUATION

If the being-structures now are studied as they exist in universal life reality, this is an investigation of the sense of the structures. The fundamental question here is one of the *sense of the being*¹⁴ of a didactic situation. If we want to grasp the sense of the being of a didactic situation, we must arrive at the ontological order.¹⁵ Only when the significance and mutual relations of the being-structures are illuminated can it be said with certainty

¹³ Landman, W.A., op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁴ Landman, W.A., *Die Opvoedingsituasie*, p. 11.

¹⁵ Kockelmans, A., *Martin Heidegger*, p. 33.



DIDACTIC PEDAGOGICAL CATEGORIES/STRUCTURES

what purpose each of them serves. The ultimate sense of the being-structures is in what is made possible through actualizing them.¹⁶

- i) The ontological sense of the categorical structure of a lesson situation is that the categories disclose fundamental truisms and features of a didactic event which have significance for the fruitful course of the event. Categories are *illuminative means of thinking* (Landman) in terms of which we *learn to know and describe* the activity of *didaskein* (Van der Stoep).
- ii) The ontological sense of the structure of the ground-forms is included in the fact that all teaching in the original, as well as in reconstituted situations, must take their course in terms of basic forms of living or ground -forms.¹⁷ A question about what is constitutive of a life form to qualify it as a ground-form can only be answered by stipulating that the categories and criteria constitutive of *didaskein* must figure in and must have fundamental relevance within each ground-form before it can qualify as a ground-form.¹⁸
- iii) The ontological sense of the aim structure is in the *results* of the entire *teaching event*. A question about the aim of teaching is a question about the essence of *didaskein*. Our aim structure necessarily includes more than only the categorical structure because, at the same time, it refers to the *results* of it.

This is explained as follows: At the end of a didactic event, the following questions can be asked:

Was there an unlocking of reality?
Has forming taken place?
Has the child learned?

Each of these questions can be answered yes or no. A “yes” or “no” answer is necessarily a motivation for them. However, to give this motivation, the ontological way is

¹⁶ Landman, W.A., op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁷ Van der Stoep, F., *Didaktiese Grondvorme*, p. 100 et seq.

¹⁸ Gous, S.J., *Verantwoording van die Didakties-Pedagogiese*, p. 117 et seq.

sometimes abandoned, and a more logical way is followed.¹⁹ The motivating then includes the didactic criteria, as explained by Van der Stoep.²⁰

Because a teaching event is always realized in terms of specific content, the results of our teaching also are specific. For this reason, the aim structure has a two-fold nature:

- a) A formal result of a teaching activity directed at presenting content, and which refers to questions such as the following:

Is there a greater degree of perspectivity observed with a child? Has the pupil proceeded to constitute a new reality? However, these questions can be answered only in terms of explicit content.

- b) Results of the event from the explicit content. These two aspects can be illustrated in terms of the following question: How has a child come to a better perspectivity from presenting this learning content? Now an answer can only be given with greater certainty in terms of the formal as well as explicit results of the teaching event.

- iv) The ontological sense of the criterial structure is in making possible²¹ evaluating the figuring forth of and thinking about the categorical-, aim-, content- and planning-structures, as well as the structure of the ground-forms. Supplementarily, the sense of the criteria is that they can be applied to determine:

In which way a situation can be judged in a didactic sense; in which way such a situation can be constituted; in which way a desired situation can be repeated.²²

¹⁹ Van der Stoep, F., *Didaktiese Grondvorme*, p. 34.

²⁰ Van der Stoep, F., op. cit., pp. 34-38.

²¹ Landman, W.A., *Die Opvoedingsituasie*, p. 12.

²² Van der Stoep, F., *Didaktiese Grondvorme*, pp. 33-38.

- v) The ontological sense of the planning structure is that it gives embodiment to *ground-form(s)*, by which teaching takes its course, and by which the *categorical* structure and *aim structure* come to fulfillment, and ultimately, there also can be an evaluation and reconstituting (re-planning) based on the findings of the criterial structure.

Any form of teaching which is going to be planned beforehand, necessarily is correspondingly formal. Therefore, a lesson situation in a school always shows a reconstituted and planned structure. If any adult wants to teach formally, but his/her teaching is not planned beforehand, it will be intuitive and haphazard. Thus, if planning teaching is lacking, necessarily this leads to losing aspects of the formal character of a teaching situation. Viewed from the pupils' experiencing, the presentation might seem to him/her to occur formally but, in its essence, this is not true.

The planning structure includes the principles of ordering the learning material, the methodological principles, and the principles of actualization. In planning any formal teaching situation (lesson situation), all these principles must be thoroughly considered. However, these are not the only principles for which there must be planning. The total structure of *didaskhein*, as manifested in the original experience, must be reconstituted also in the anticipation, and planning of a formal lesson situation. The planning of a lesson form can only be done in terms of the awareness of the structures from the original experience. Specifically, it is the ground-form which establishes a bridge between the life form of the original experience and the form of a lesson situation. It is this *known form* which sets a child in "motion".

By linking up with the knowledge regarding the essential structure of the formal teaching situation, we now can more [explicitly] isolate and describe matters regarding the ordering of the learning material.

2.5 PRINCIPLES OF ORDERING THE LEARNING MATERIAL AS PART-MOMENT OF THE PLANNING STRUCTURE

From the previous explications, the following matters are clarified:

- i) Teaching, in the original experience, occurs mostly intuitively and haphazardly. Thus, there is not yet sustained, purposeful, and intentional planning for the teaching and educating. This means no parent purposefully plans from day to day the educating of his/her child.
- ii) Above and beyond the structure of the original experience, in each reconstituted teaching situation (e.g., the lesson situation in school), there must also always be planning. As soon as there is purposive planning for teaching in a situation, such a situation acquires a formal character. Therefore, a parent sometimes can purposefully plan the teaching of his/her child. As soon as this occurs, the situation, as it is realized, also has a formal character.
- iii) The principles of ordering learning material necessarily figure within the planning structure of a formal teaching situation (lesson situation). From the essence structure of the formal teaching situation, it now is clear where and in what connection the principles of ordering the learning material arise.

When learning content is ordered according to principles, the presentation takes on a specific *form*. This form can be built up by implementing one or more principles of ordering. When learning content is ordered, it now is cast in a particular form of ordering. Such ordered content can help realize a certain ground-form and particular methodological principle. However, the planning structure must always be viewed in its constitutive, interactive, and interconnected whole. Thus, there cannot be a lesson situation only by ordering the learning material. Methodological principles, didactic principles, didactic ground-forms, as well as the unique nature and structure of the content, in connection with the principles of ordering and views of the psychology of becoming, all in their mutual relations, form the composite whole of the planning structure.

2.6 SUMMARIZED THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CONCEPT “FORMAL DIDACTIC SITUATION”

Now it seems that a distinction can be made between a formal didactic situation (lesson situation) and a spontaneous, intuitive one.

The didactic activity, as actualized in the original educative situation, is characterized by the spontaneous, intuitive ways in which it occurs. Then, here there usually is no planning and, therefore, the situation has no formal character.

A formal didactic situation acquires its “formal character” because it is thoroughly planned beforehand, with the aim of realizing the situation. Any didactic situation for which there is planning is formal. Because the planning of a formal didactic situation in school also occurs in terms of the unique nature and structure of a subject, there is a lesson situation.

To plan means that there also is a link with the theory of ordering the learning material. Therefore, in the following chapter, close attention is given to the principles of ordering and their significance for didactic theory and practice.