

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 the teaching event, only ordered learning content can contribute to unlocking reality categorically for the child and bring about forming and changing in him. Thus it is clear that the question of ordering learning content only occurs in the real lesson event. Any prior planning and ordering of learning material occurs only on the basis of the anticipation and earlier experiences of implementing similar principles of ordering in particular lesson situations (subject). However, *accountable planning* only can occur in terms of particular principles that have been didactically evaluated and clearly described. The ordering of learning content according to one or another principle of ordering contributes separately and jointly to helping insure the eventual success of the 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 being able to proceed to the insightful and meaningful ordering of learning content. Questions that arise from this and that must be answered are the following:

- i) When is a particular situation a “formal” teaching situation?
- ii) Can a distinction be made between teaching in an “original” and in a “reconstituted” situation?
- iii) What are the real 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 it is necessary that the lesson structure be thoroughly explored and analyzed.

2.2 THE LESSON SITUATION AS FORMAL TEACHING SITUATION IN DIDACTIC PERSPECTIVE

Pedagogics has its point of departure in the primordial phenomenon of educating, as such. In the phenomenon of educating there is an inseparable unity between educating and teaching. The meaning of teaching is in educating and the one cannot be realized without the other. The primary aim of the parent and, later, the teacher is to bring about a “particular” change in the child through educating and teaching. This change is realized by the child learning to know particular norms, values, dispositions, cultural content, social codes, skills and scientific structures and accepting and being unconditionally obedient to them. For this aim, the school is established because the parent does not possess complete, systematic and formal knowledge of cultural content and formative systems into which the child must increasingly venture. In the school there is teaching in more formal, organized and planned ways. Thus, it is only in the school where the lesson situation primarily figures. This is not to claim that there is formal teaching only in the school. Each parent also can purposefully and formally teach his 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 must be clearly stated that the formal teaching situation, as a secondary lesson situation, never should be elevated to the situation that must serve as the primary point of departure for reflecting about *didaskein*. The didactician has only one common point of departure for reflecting on the question of “teaching”, namely, the phenomenon of teaching as it appears in the spontaneous life world of persons.⁸ In terms of the insights acquired from reflecting on the event in the original situation, the didactician now can proceed to

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

look for points of departure and principles to realize as he now plans for the situations reconstituted in the 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 the adult who understand and knows and the child who does not understand and know. The child always has the life world of the adult as his destination and also as his task. Immediately, this implies that the child, in his relatedness and being bound to the life world of the adult, also is a task for the adult because he must “transport” the child from the world of the child to his [adult] world.⁹ In the lesson situation this task of the adult is realized directly and actually. Therefore, the adult purposefully and, as far as possible, with confidence must design a particular lesson situation. The necessity for this is that the didactician has to analyze and learn to know the being-structure of didactic situations so that his planning no longer is haphazard.

Now it is necessary first to elucidate more closely the concept being-structure from a didactic-pedagogic perspective.

2.3.1 The meaning of the word “structure”

The word structure can be traced to its Latin root *structura* and the verb *struere* that means “construct”. All Latin words with the ending *-ura* refer to a particular activity that is carried out. Thus, “structure” refers to a particular 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”

In light of the above, the concept “being-structure” is explicated briefly. When there is mention of “structure” a particular aspect of reality is broached. The structure of each slice of reality will be that

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

aspect that is a constituent of and unique to it, i.e., without which that reality cannot figure forth. In other words, when there is talk of the structure of a particular reality this means those aspects of reality that are a precondition for its being-there (thus *being*). This structure is the being-structure of that reality. There are seven ways in which a structure makes itself knowable as a being-structure.¹⁰

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

A being-structure is a constitutive unity. In other words, it is that part of reality without which this 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 really is.

A being-structure is a precondition. A precondition is something that must be present before something else (for example, the lesson situation) can exist or be brought about. Therefore, a precondition serves as a foundation or basis for the constitution of the particular 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 that earlier was built up (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 that is (exists) and that essentially belongs to that of which it is an essence. We can 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 refined the essences to authentic

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

knowing-structures. This means that finding and understanding essences, also in planning a lesson, are preconditions for understanding a particular 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 experiencable. “This is to say, it is what is lived experienced by the 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, the teacher’s presentation cannot be close to life without it. Landman further indicates, phenomenologically, that being-structures only can be cleared up 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 particular 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 the teaching event because the ground forms:

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

¹¹ Landman, W.A., op. cit., p. 4.

¹² Landman, W.A., op. cit., p. 5.

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

- 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 the lesson situation in connection with the essence-structure of teaching in the original experience.

From the above, it now is the task of the 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 the lesson situations. For this reason the ontological questioning of the lesson situation phenomenologically is a necessity to arrive at particular being-structures and their resulting meaningfulness. Thus, we see that the sense-structures really also are being-structures that are disclosed as real essences from which the essentials become understood by unveiling and opening up thinking activities and from which their “for what” [purpose] becomes clear.¹³

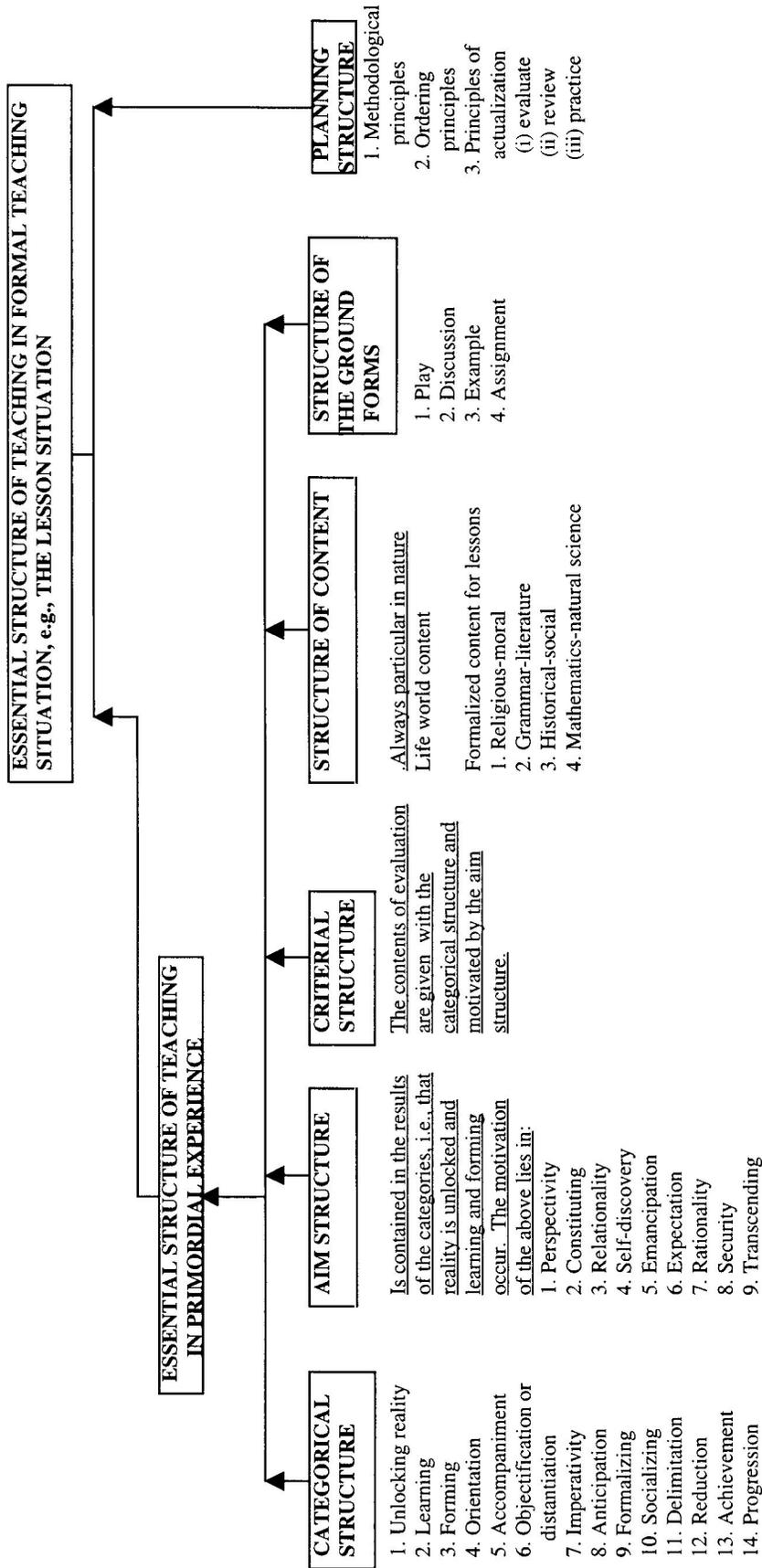
2.4 THE SENSE OF THE BEING-STRUCTURES IN THE LESSON SITUATION

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

¹³ Landman, W.A., op. cit., p. 11.

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

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



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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 the lesson situation is that the categories disclose fundamental truisms and features of the didactic event that have particular significance for the fruitful course of the event. Categories are *illuminative means of thinking* (Landman) in terms of which we can *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 particular 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 only can be answered by stipulating that the categories and criteria that are 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.

Briefly, this can be explained as follows: At the end of the 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 necessarily is 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.

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

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

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

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

- b) Results of the event on the basis of the explicit content. These two aspects can be illustrated in terms of the following question: How has the child come to a better perspectivity on the basis of presenting this particular learning content? Now an answer only can 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 the 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) on the basis of the findings of the criterial structure.

Any form of teaching that is going to be planned more or less beforehand necessarily will correspondingly be formal in nature. Therefore, the lesson situation in the school always shows a reconstituted and planned structure. If any adult wants to teach formally but his teaching is not planned beforehand it will be intuitive and haphazard. Thus, if planning the teaching is lacking, necessarily this leads to losing aspects of the formal character of the teaching situation. Viewed from the pupils' experiencing, the presentation might seem to him 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 of these principles must be thoroughly considered. However, these are not the only principles in terms of which there must be planning. The total structure of *didaskein*, 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 only can be done on the basis of the awareness of structures from the original experience. In particular, it is the ground form that establishes a bridge between the life form of the original experience and the form of the lesson situation. It is this *known form* that sets the child in "motion".

By linking up with the knowledge regarding the essential structure of the formal teaching situation we now are in a position to more clearly isolate and describe particular 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 clear:

- i) Teaching, in the original experience, largely occurs intuitively and haphazardly. Thus there is not yet sustained, purposeful and intentional planning for the teaching and educating. This means that no parent purposefully plans from day to day the educating of his 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 particular situation such a situation acquires a formal character. Therefore, a parent sometimes can purposefully plan the teaching of his 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 the formal teaching situation (lesson situation). From the essence structure of the formal teaching situation it now is very clear where and in what connection the principles of ordering the learning material arise.

When learning content is ordered according to particular principles, the presentation takes on a specific *form*. This form can be built up by implementing one or more principles of ordering. If the 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 always must be viewed in its constitutive, interactive and interconnected whole. Thus, there cannot be mention of a particular lesson situation only on the basis of 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 clear 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 mention of 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 in nature. Because the planning of a formal didactic situation in school also occurs in terms of the unique nature and structure of a particular subject there is mention of 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 particular principles of ordering and their significance for didactic theory and practice.