

The lesson plan as resource and didactic strategy to prepare professors for higher education

Plano de aula enquanto recurso e estratégia didática na formação de docentes para o ensino superior

Plan de clase como recurso y estrategia didáctica en la formación de docentes para la educación superior

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The purpose of this essay is to discuss the use of the lesson plan as a resource and teaching strategy in the process of training professors for higher education. It describes the experience of the subject "University and Teaching", offered at the Post-graduation Program in Psychology at the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro, Uberaba/MG/Brazil. Organizational models of teaching plans, lesson plans and teaching evaluation are presented. The lesson plan is not presented merely as a document to guide the planning of programmatic content, but as a didactic strategy that changes as the classes happen, representing a constant possibility of dialogue between the content and its practical execution due to the characteristics of the professors, the students and the subject being taught. The limits and potential of this proposal are presented and discussed, as well as its implications for the training of undergraduate professors.

Descriptors: Teaching materials; Teaching; Learning; Education higher.

O objetivo deste ensaio é discutir sobre a utilização do plano de aula enquanto recurso e estratégia didática no processo de formação de docentes para o ensino superior. Descreve-se a experiência da disciplina de "Universidade e Docência", ofertada no Programa de Pós-graduação em Psicologia da Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro. São apresentados modelos de organização de planos de ensino, de planos de aula e de avaliação da docência. Apresenta-se o plano de aula não apenas como um documento que orienta o planejamento dos conteúdos programáticos, mas como uma estratégia didática que se movimenta no acontecer da aula, representando uma possibilidade de diálogo constante entre conteúdos e a sua execução prática em função de características dos docentes, dos alunos e da disciplina ministrada. Limitações e potencialidades dessa proposta são apresentadas e discutidas, bem como suas implicações para a formação de docentes para o ensino superior.

Descritores: Materiais de ensino; Ensino; Aprendizagem; Educação superior;

El objetivo de este ensayo es discutir sobre la utilización del plan de clase como recurso y estrategia didáctica en el proceso de formación de docentes para la enseñanza superior. Se describe la experiencia de la materia "Universidad y Docencia", ofrecida en el Programa de Pos-graduación en Psicología de la Universidad Federal do Triângulo Mineiro, Uberaba, MG, Brasil. Son presentados modelos de organización de planes de enseñanza, de planes de clase y de evaluación de la docencia. Se presenta el plan de clase no solo como un documento que orienta el planeamiento de los contenidos programáticos, sino también como una estrategia didáctica que se mueve en el transcurrir de la clase, representando una posibilidad de diálogo constante entre contenidos y su ejecución práctica en función de características de los docentes, de los alumnos y de la materia transmitida. Limitaciones y potencialidades de esta propuesta son presentadas y discutidas, así como sus implicaciones para la formación de docentes para la enseñanza superior.

Descriptores: Materiales de enseñanza; Enseñanza; Aprendizaje; Educación superior.

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INTRODUCTION

This essay describes the experience in the subject entitled "University and Teaching", offered in the graduate program in psychology of the Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM-PPGP), in the city of Uberaba, State of Minas Gerais, as a source for a discussion about training professor for higher education. Such reflection is driven from a specific starting point: the construction, planning and evaluation of teaching plans and lesson plans, contents that permeate the didactic training in undergraduate programs.

This work begins with a short presentation about the current situation of Psychology post-graduate degrees, highlighting some of their key challenges and possibilities in contemporary times, specifically with regard to the training of professors for higher education. After this brief introduction, the way in which the subject "University and Teaching" was created is presented, as it is the center of the discussion regarding professor formation.

Later, lesson plans are highlighted as a resource and a teaching strategy for professor education, and some possibilities of construction of lesson and teaching plans in subjects of undergraduate and post-graduation courses are presented. Thus, the objective of this essay is to discuss the use of the lesson plans while resources and teaching strategies in the process of training professors for higher education.

METHOD

This article is a reflection about the construction of lesson plans in a postgraduate course. It delineates the history of the PPGP-UFTM, as well as presents some conceptual aspects that are relevant to the theme and to the practical performance of the subject "University and Teaching". Practical examples of the process are brought, involving the building, revision and evaluation of these tools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Post-graduation in Psychology: challenges and potentials

When it comes, specifically, to Post-graduate Psychology programs in Brazil, the field has been facing a set of challenges, including the need for greater geographical and thematic coverage, the improvement of evaluation systems and the articulation of different possible outcomes of a Post-graduation in Psychology, given the heterogeneity of the programs and the production of knowledge in the field¹. The internationalization of these programs and the need for improvements for a more solid and broad methodological training should be pursued by those responsible for these programas².

In addition to a promising setting in the Psychology field, the need for greater expansion has been pointed out³, notably in terms of the existence of Post-graduate programs in Psychology in all Brazilian States. It has been recommended that institutions which already offer Master's degree courses should start offering PhD courses, as a means to achieve an annual growth of 10% of in professionals with these educational levels.

Considering these directives, the Psychology Post Graduate Program of the Federal University of the Triângulo Mineiro (PPGP - UFTM) started its activities in 2015, in the city of Uberaba, MG. The organization of this program came from the activities of the undergraduate course in Psychology of UFTM, created in the 2009, whose first group of students graduated in 2013. UFTM was founded in 1953, transformed in a federal college in 1960, and in an University on July 29, 2005, by Law No. 11,152. The PPGP-UFTM emerged as a proposal for the training of researchers and professors for higher education. It derived from one of the objectives of the undergraduate program, the "Production of Scientific Knowledge in Psychology", which offered, specifically, subjects that trained students for researching.

The overall objective of the PPGP is "developing studies, researches and teaching in the field of psychology, as well as training

professionals for this purpose". As indicated in the PPGP proposal, another of its goals is to contribute to the training of professors and researchers in psychology, aligned with new perspectives regarding the production of scientific knowledge. That can be verified by the National Post-graduate Program Guidelines (PNPG 2011-2020), published by CAPES, as well as through other means. Among these perspectives is the need to encourage the development of the Post-graduation courses not only as a space to acquire a qualification or certificate, but as a space to really bring forward scientific research, generating the internationalization of Brazilian academic production, tightening relationships with other teaching institutions, especially the foreign ones, generating innovations and changing the paradigms of reproduction and copy of previously conducted researches².

More investments should be made for the creation of an adequate scientific base and of environments that are appropriate for experimentation and creativity⁴. That involves the training of new Masters and Ph.D. alumni, to diminish regional inequalities when it comes to qualified formation, and work opportunities.

Among those needs, teaching seems to emerge as a sometimes overlooked aspect in Post-graduate programs⁵. In order to educate high quality researchers, teaching is often presented as a separate and less important function, an understanding that does not correspond to contemporary thought, according to which research is one of the competences professors must have. Thus, the formation of the teaching staff is broader than many believe, research activities being a possibility in the field, perhaps one of the most important ones⁶⁻¹⁰. The inseparable association between teaching and research affects many proposals for Post-graduate programs, sometimes considering that teaching training is something essentially distant of a broader and reflective education, as if it were an auxiliary and complementary dimension to research.

Master and PhD projects and the dense education regarding research

methodologies make up a typical curriculum that aims at training a researcher. However, teaching education is often understood as being accessory, something for which specific training is not necessary - perhaps because everyone had, throughout their lives, contact with professors and with the processes of teaching and learning. There is, therefore, a naturalization of teaching and of the professor training processes. That weakens the training process in Post-graduation, which focuses on higher education. It is, therefore, recommended for teaching to be treated by post-graduate courses as an inherent part of a researcher's training, thus promoting a more inclusive reading for the construction of the graduate of a Masters' degree program - all of which will be discussed in more detail later in this essay.

Considering this necessity and seeking the formation of a professional who is fit to perform as a professor, researcher and in university extensions, the PPGP-UFTM created a compulsory subject entitled: "University and Teaching" that will be described below. The objective of this analysis is encouraging, developing and discussing professor formation, giving instruments to master degree students to perform their teaching practice such as presented in other propositions^{11,12}.

University and Teaching: the proposal of a subject for professor education

"University and Teaching" is one of the mandatory classes in the UFTM Post-graduate Psychology program. It is worth four credits, which is to say it occupies 60 hours of class per semester. Its syllabus includes discussions about the history of the University and of higher education teaching, as well as reflections on the challenges confronted by the University, teaching practices and post-graduation formation.

This subject serves as a base for program's teaching internship, which can take place from the second semester of the master's degree on, with the participation of the master's degree student in teaching activities in the undergraduate Psychology course, under the guidance of their advisor or of the faculty member responsible for the

discipline. The teaching internship is mandatory in the PPGP, as it is an essential part of the process of training professors for higher education.

Shared by three professors of the program, to diversify the references in terms of the practice of teaching, the discipline is divided into three modules: 1st module: University; 2nd module: teaching in higher education; 3rd module: teaching and assessment Strategies. The first two modules aim to contextualize the student regarding the notion of University, its history and the arrival of the first undergraduation and post-graduation courses in the country⁹.

Such historic training is understood to be essential to allow the student to develop the ability to read critically about the actions of the professor and the social role occupied by professionals that act in education, especially in higher education, as the subject portrays. Therefore, historic backgrounds and current perspectives regarding these courses are presented, focusing on the Psychology post-graduation.

In the second module, aspects inherent to higher education teaching are approached, such as its complexities, challenges and potentialities^{5,10}. The last

module, more directly related to the content of this essay, highlights some of the key strategies for teaching and evaluation in higher education. Accordingly, the students are presented with two important tools that permeate the practice of teaching: the teaching plan and the lesson plan.

As an evaluation criterion of the discipline, the students are invited to propose a teaching plan to be developed in a discipline of the undergraduate Psychology course. They must choose a discipline (mandatory or elective) from the UFTM Psychology course, based on the analysis of the pedagogic project of the course, which is made available on the website of the institution. The teaching plan must be based on the syllabus of the chosen discipline. From this starting point, the student must develop a lesson plan for a graduate course in Psychology, choosing a lesson that is within subject selected from the teaching plan. This lesson, then, is presented to the class undergraduate class, and evaluated according to criteria that are available to the students and based on the evaluation process for public selective process that take place in the institution. These criteria are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Items evaluated in the lesson taught by the student of the subject University and Teaching (PPGP-UFTM). Uberaba, MG, Brazil, 2017.

| Items | Maximum grade | Grade |
|--|---------------|-------|
| Evaluation of the lesson plan according to the lesson being taught, being observed the didactic-methodological consistency, and the presence or absence of the following items: theme, goals, content, methodology, resources, and references. | 2.5 | |
| Theoretical-practical domain of the field of knowledge | 2.5 | |
| Organization of ideas, clarity, coherence and communicability (critical spirit, fluency, objectivity and adequacy of language). | 3.0 | |
| Adequacy of lesson to time constraints, with a consistent use of time. | 2.0 | |
| Total | 10.0 | |

These criteria, present in the professor selection public notices, are a way to prepare and standardize the evaluation of different candidates. Although it can be argued that this process looks at the lesson from a limited and partial perspective, and that the class should be discussed and

apprehended as a sum of many different elements that involve planning, execution and evaluation, this method was chosen for being considered the most similar to that used in current professor evaluation processes, preparing the students, as a consequence, for such tests. Thus, the subject

seeks to raise broader discussions about the process of evaluation of a lesson or didactic component, for example, also showing how a lesson can be evaluated from a more bureaucratic, punctual or specific perspective - which is the selection of university professors. For the PPGP-UFTM subject, there was a change in the score offered by the items, with the first receiving a higher score, which relates to the lesson plan, regarding the goals of the discipline. In the selective processes of this institution, the lesson plan score is one. Therefore, the essentially didactic profile of the evaluation activity in the subject is shown.

The quality of a lesson cannot be limited to these criteria, but providing and clarifying the candidates about it can guide them in their preparation for these selection processes. Making the assessment a reflective and non-linear process must be a constant concern of education professionals. According to Hoffmann¹³, to evaluate the new educational and cultural paradigms is to improve opportunities for action-reflection, in a permanent process of accompanying the evolution of the professor. The professor should offer students, in their learning process, reflections about the world, forming critical, and participative people, grounded on the new requirements of current society¹⁴. Such aspects can and should guide the construction of didactic proposals embodied in lesson plans.

Although these criteria are used by the institution being considered, and are not necessarily used in others, they offer a possibility of understanding what is a higher education class. These criteria can work as a trigger to build new ones, more adequate to each case and proposal.

Regarding these requirements, the first criteria states the professor (or the student who is being prepared to be one, in the case of the PPGP-UFTM subject, must present a plan that is according to the class to be taught, and that is methodological and didactically coherent to it. Often students in training choose to present lessons that resemble what is known as a seminar, that is, the student presents the theme for an

audience, making sure that it is well exposed and there are no errors or misunderstandings regarding content. However, a class demands special types of care that are different from the seminary: it is not enough to present the content, it is necessary to generate the adequate conditions for people to understand these concepts and their importance for their education.

Therefore, a way to help the professor to build this path and contribute for the student to learn, is to require the presence of the following aspects in the lesson plan: explanation of the theme of the class, the objectives, the content to be discussed, the methodologies to be used so that the objectives are acquired, the resources used, as well as the evaluation of the class taught and an indication of the references used in the classroom. These requirements, if respected, offer a perspective about the class, which then becomes something different from the seminary, a form of presentation with which the students who have just come from undergraduation are more familiar.

Another aspect evaluated is the theoretical-practical domain of the field of knowledge. In this category the mastery of the professor of the theme they are presenting should be evaluated, considering whether or not it is aligned to the main knowledge in that field, among other things. The student must demonstrate that they not only can explain the themes discussed, but that they domain them. We seek to understand if the professor has knowledge about the area and is eloquent in their presentation of it. The professor must demonstrate not only that they studied and prepared for class, but that they dominate the field of study and can articulate the elaboration of other classes and contents related to a specific area. Since it is not always possible to watch a candidate present several classes, the candidate must make it possible for his knowledge to be perceived in one specific class.

The third requirement regards aspects such as the organization of ideas, clarity, coherence/consistency and

communicability (critical spirit, fluency, objectivity and language adequation). It is important that the class is structured with a logical sequence, with a definition of the framework, development and conclusion. The content should go from the simplest to the more general, complex and specific.

Aspects such as the objectivity and critical spirit must be present. It is important for the evaluators to be able to understand whether the student managed to prepare the class in the most didactic way possible, that is, thinking about how is it that a certain content can be taught, explained or presented in an adequate and coherent way. Remaining consistent to the objective of the class is paramount in this process, including the choice of what will be presented, as well as the ways to evaluate the understanding and acquisition of the contents by the students.

The adequacy of the subject to time exposure, with consistent usage of time, is a technical aspect that sometimes is central to a class, especially when the professor (or the candidate to a competition, for example) does not meet this requirement. Normally, a 50-minute lesson is suggested, with a tolerance of five minutes more or less - that is, the lesson can last between 45 to 55 minutes. The more the professor trains their presentation and feel safe about the subject they must address, the greater the chance of them staying inside the time constraints of the evaluation. Controlling time is critical, and can be done with the help of a watch, chronometer, or even through the use of numbered slides, whenever the use of slides is a possibility. All those tools allow the professor to be aware of the pace of the class. Being prepared to deal with unpredicted situations is also an important thing to train for.

Lesson plans as a teaching resource and strategy

The lesson plan is therefore one of the papers delivered by the students at the end of the "University and Teaching" subject, during their final presentations, i.e., their classes. The lesson plan is used as a way to make sure that students have understood not only how

teaching can take place in higher education, but also how this tool can be used as a way to aid in the planning of the lesson and of the contents of the subject, as well as structuring the program so that the objectives sought can be achieved. In this essay, two conceptions about the lesson plan are brought forth: (a) its use as a resource; (b) its use as a didactic strategy.

Lesson plans are mostly presented as resources used especially in selective processes, in which the didactic ability of a candidate is evaluated as regards to higher education teaching. In day-to-day practices, the class plans are not always created or clearly discussed and presented to the students. The candidate is expected to have the ability to organize the content and to propose teaching and evaluation strategies adequate to the theme that they aim to teach. In many selection processes, the evaluation of the lesson plan is one of the prerequisites of a didactic test, and so, candidates that do not present the lesson plan or do not discuss the aspects included in the plan end up losing points or even failing that specific stage of the process. Therefore, the ability to build a lesson plan is assumed to be essential to assess the competence of a candidate of a selection process for professor.

This perspective about the syllabus, however, explores it only as a resource, as something required to the presentation of a class, and as a result, it sometimes is made automatically, mechanically, without an adequate reflection about what was proposed, being merely a formal document. Several templates are provided, but few are actually discussed. But when, during the post-graduation process, does the student have access to reflections on the creation of lesson plans? Notably, some of these discussions are presented in undergraduate courses.

In the specific case of Psychology, a course which is often offered without the modalities in which there is a higher number of classes about pedagogy, the education of these professionals may be compromised in this aspect. That means that the post-graduation courses are very important in

order to contribute to the formation of higher education professors^{2,5}.

Considering this criticism, this essay has developed the notion that the lesson plan can be offered as a didactic strategy, something that is more than an auxiliary tool, more than a document that must be delivered by the student as a part of merely formal or bureaucratic pre-requisites inherent to the life of a professor. That is to say, the lesson plan cannot be just a document to be delivered to the professor at the beginning of class: it is something that should be evoked as an important voice throughout its entirety.

There must be, thus, a dialectic process involving student and lesson plan; it cannot be just a script of what is going to be presented or approached in class. The plan must also be understood as an ongoing strategy, that can be constantly reevaluated, reformulated, reviewed, criticized, that is, it is a dynamic dimension. Being open to such a movement is as important as correctly planning and dimensioning the execution of what is going to be presented.

It is important for the professor to dialogue with content available in the lesson plan throughout the class. Its goal, for instance, cannot be something simply presented in the beginning of the class, but must be recalled at the end, to address the question of whether it was achieved or not. It can even be mentioned throughout the class, so that the didactic sequence and the content presented can be justified according to the objective. That shows that the entire program selected for the class and the sequence in which it must be presented or approached, fundamentally depends on the objective being sought.

This objective can be recalled whenever necessary, both to maintain the proposition, the focus and the consistency of the class, and to foment the interest of other students. It is important, as one is learning, to understand the usefulness, the purpose or necessity of each content or strategy. The clearer this is to the student, the higher the chances of an adequate development of the educational process.

In the proposition of the subject being discussed, the students are encouraged to use the lesson plan more didactically, as something more than a mere formal requirement. They are encouraged to build the lesson plan at all times, in a dialectic process, adjusting it as the class goes on, according to the possible doubts and even to the reevaluations that can happen with any type of plan from the moment the class takes place, on. They can, for instance, monitor the evolution of the path defined by the plan, so that the students clearly understand its importance.

Students who are graduating to become future professors, need the ways in which the content can be organized, approached, developed and re-thought to be highlighted. There always are more appropriate forms of teaching according to the class, the content, the time you have available and the professors themselves. Understanding the lesson plan as a dynamic resource that, although previously planned, can be altered as the class continues, is a way to not freeze teaching into a manual category, to articulate it to the numerous nuances of teaching and the essential contact between professor and student.

Lesson plan construction

The so-called scientific education crisis¹⁵ reveals that the way in which scientific knowledge lost is meaning to young adults in contemporary times not only limits its usefulness and applicability by the students, but also its relevance. One of the reasons for this lack of interest lacks in the growing divide between the science that is taught in schools and the students themselves, who do not feel as a part of this setting, do not feel as a part of the content studied. That can be observed in elementary and high school, and even in universities.

The lesson plan is a tool, a resource and a didactic strategy. Due to its relevance and complexity, its construction is permeated by a difficult action of planning. This planning involves not only delineating what to teach and how, but also trying to predict how such content will be acquired and received by students. The possibility of

reviewing this previous plan can be understood as flexibility, a return to the dynamic nature of class plans. Table 2 presents a proposition for the construction of a lesson plan, including all the main aspects that can or must be present in that document.

Table 2. Lesson plan template. Uberaba, MG, Brazil, 2017.

| | |
|---|---|
| Identification | |
| University name (example: University of São Paulo) | |
| College name (example: Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ribeirão Preto) | |
| Psychology Department, USP. | |
| Name of the subject (example: Counseling Psychology) | |
| Time period when it will be offered (for example: 2nd semester of 2016) | |
| Tutor (Professor's name) | |
| Lesson Plan | |
| Date: | |
| Theme | Psychological Duty : Constructs and techniques |
| Objective | Understand the modality psychological duty and know some of the constructs and techniques that guide the actions of the professionals in the area. |
| Contents | (1) <i>Conceptual</i> : definition of a psychological duty and its main approaches, researches and interventions. (2) <i>Procedures</i> : how to plan, develop and reflect on interventions that make use of the psychological duty modality; how to develop attitudes to listen on duty. (3) <i>Attitude</i> : What attitudes can make the psychological duty easier and what is expected from a professional that acts in this field when it comes to his or her competences, abilities and attitudes. |
| Classroom strategies | (1) Warming Activity (10 minutes) (2) Expository lecture (50 minutes) (3) Class evaluation (40 minutes) |
| Warming activity | (1) Individual reflection on a personal experience of suffering and the need to seek help (2) If possible, write a little about the situation or note down its main aspects. |
| Class evaluation | (1) Discussion of a case of assistance offered in a psychological duty, inside a religious community, with small groups (from 2 to 3 people) (2) Discussion of the same case with the students |
| References | <u>Class readings:</u> Chaves, P. B., & Henriques, W. M. (2008). Plantão psicológico: De frente com o inesperado. <i>Psicologia Argumento</i> , 26(53), 151-157. Mahfoud, M. (2013). Desafios sempre renovados: Plantão psicológico. In M. A. Tassinari, A. P. S. Cordeiro, & W. T. Durange (Orgs.), <i>Revisitando o plantão psicológico centrado na pessoa</i> (pp. 33-50). Curitiba, CRV. <u>Additional readings:</u> Sehgal, R., Saules, K. Young, A., Grey, M. J., Gillem, A. R., & Nabors, N. A. (2011). Practicing what we know: Multicultural counseling competence among clinical Psychology trainees and experienced multicultural psychologists. <i>Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology</i> , 17(1), 1-10. |

The first aspect to be mentioned is the difference between theme and objective. The objective or goal is what is what the specific class intends regarding a certain theme. In the example given in table 2, it can be found that the theme of the class is included in its objective, as highlighted in the following passage: the objective of the class is "Understanding the modality *psychological duty*[theme] and understand some of the

constructs and techniques[theme] that guide the actions of the professionals in the area".

The objective must also mention the students, that is, must discuss what is the objective to be achieved by the students at the end of the class or educational process. In the example above, at the end of the class on psychological duty, the student must "Understand the modality psychological duty and know some of the constructs and techniques that guide the actions of the

professionals in the area. The verbs used in the wording of the objective also denote educational actions, "understand" and "know". It's not the professors who must understand and know, but the students, that is, the people who will have access to the class and to the knowledge taught or mediated by professors. The writing of the objectives must always consider that these are the objectives for the student.

The content can be divided into conceptual, procedural and attitude-related. The contents cannot always be arranged that way, but it is important for the student that is graduating to try and systematize the contents, so as they can deal with the different needs and requirements that permeate the construction of each of these contents. Presenting concepts requires certain competences and specific challenges. Dealing with procedures requires more specific abilities, for instance, how to plan, how to develop, how to reflect. The procedures involve a "how-to", a "how to operationalize". The attitude-related content, on the other hand, basically discuss postures that should be developed and operationalized. They refer to a professional "acting", to the way in which one must deal, during practice, with certain activities, phenomena and constructs.

Classroom strategies must be organized according to the time available. It is important to explore different strategies, which will depend on the content to be explored and the purpose of the class. Evaluation strategies must occupy a prominent place in the plan, given that they do not take occur only at the end of the process, as traditionally considered, but must be a part of the class as a whole¹³⁻¹⁴. The evaluations proposed can be traditional (content acquisition verifications, tests, exams) or explore attitudes such as mediation, dialogue, joint building of knowledge, from a more dialectic perspective⁸.

The most important factor of the objectives is that the student be able to achieve them through the content that was presented in class, that is, the evaluations

must be coherent and compatible with what has been taught, discussed, collectively produced. Optionally, there is the possibility that the students go beyond the knowledge considered adequate during class, starting to develop competences that, for instance, will solidify throughout the next classes or even the subject as a whole. Therefore, the evaluations can represent a higher level of requirement, if support for this is offered to the students in their incursion in this territory of new challenges and more complex tasks.

The evaluations can also explore individual aspects of students or of established relationships between them in pairs, trios, or even with the entire group. The specific readings for the class can be separated in previous readings, readings conducted during class or after it, to guarantee content fixation and reflections. It is important for a clear reading script to be offered, and the professor can also comment on these references, highlighting the most important issues, in which the students should focus. The professor can also make these comments in order to justify the use of specific references for the achievement of the proposed didactic objective. The selected readings must be articulated, not merely indicated. Considerations about the construction of the teaching plan are presented in the next section.

Teaching plan construction

The syllabus is a broader document than the lesson plan. The lesson plan is built individually for each class. The teaching plan includes all the lesson plans for a subject, and therefore, it is the planning for the presentation of all sets of knowledge required by it.

Strictly speaking, a teaching plan is not always required in a selection process. However, in the subject "University and Teaching", discussed in this essay, the exercise of building a teaching plan is required as a way to allow the student to elaborate didactic and content sequences for an entire subject. This organization can be useful for the teaching internship, mandatory for the completion of the master's degree

course in this program. Table 3 presents a "Psychology" template syllabus for the subject "Counseling

Table 3. Syllabus template. Uberaba, MG, Brazil, 2017.

| | |
|---|--|
| Identification | |
| University name (example: University of São Paulo) | |
| College name (example: Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ribeirão Preto) | |
| Psychology Department, USP. | |
| Name of the subject (example: Counseling Psychology) | |
| Time period when it will be offered (for example: 2nd semester of 2016) | |
| Tutor (Professor's name) | |
| Teaching plan | |
| Syllabus | The Counseling Psychology field and its importance for the education of the Psychology professional. Definitions, concepts and connections with psychotherapy and other forms of psychological support. |
| General objective | Presenting the student with conditions to reflect on certain aspects of a human relationship and, more specifically, of a supporting relationship. |
| Specific objectives | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the field of Counseling Psychology. 2. Defining the field of Psychological Duty. 3. Getting to know the characteristics of a supporting relationship. 4. Identifying some basic features of the Psychology professional that favor the establishment and continuity of a supporting relationship, regardless of theoretical approaches. |
| Program | <p>Conceptual content:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History and conceptualization of Counseling Psychology and Psychological Duty. 2. Counseling Psychology in various contexts: interview, educational counseling, career guidance, psychotherapy, health, legal and educational. 3. Counseling Psychology from various approaches: psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, phenomenological-existential, Positive Psychology. <p>Procedural content:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of a supporting relationship. 2. Ethical procedures in the offering of psychological support. 3. Construction, implementation and evaluation of Counseling and Psychological Duty. 4. Research methods in Counseling Psychology. <p>Attitude-related contents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of the personal characteristics of the professional to establish supporting relationships. 2. Reflections on the education of the therapist when it comes to competencies, skills and professional attitudes (authenticity, empathy, emotional maturity and positive considerations about both the human being and oneself). 3. Establishment of a support relationship as a form of professional experience. <p>Basic training course (60 hours):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theoretical and technical preparation to offer Counselling Psychology and Psychological Duty in different institutions. 2. Performance of the basic stage in different institutions. 3. Evaluation of the basic stage in terms of content and attitudes developed and to be improved. |
| Method | <p>Method</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expositive classes and conversations with professionals who work in the field 2. Reading and discussion of tests in class and in small groups. 3. Experiences (exercises inside the classroom) 4. Basic internship (not included in the 45-hours per semester of the subject) |
| Evaluation | <p>Criterion: the final grade will be the weighted average of the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student self-assessment, including evaluation criteria and grade justification (3) 2. Participation in class discussions and exercises (3) 3. Writing of a theoretic experience-based essay about the basic internship (4) <p>Recovery test (if final grade lower than 5.0): written exam on all the contents of the discipline.</p> |
| Basic bibliography | Corey, G. (1983). <i>Técnicas de aconselhamento e psicoterapia</i> (M. L. E Silva, Trad.). Rio de Janeiro: Campus. |

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| | Forghieri, Y. C. (2007). <i>Aconselhamento terapêutico: Origens, fundamentos e prática</i> . São Paulo: Thomson Learning. Patterson, L. E., & Eisenberg, S. (1988). <i>O processo de aconselhamento</i> . São Paulo: Martins Fontes. Rosenberg, R. L. (Org.) (1987). <i>Aconselhamento psicológico centrado na pessoa</i> . São Paulo: EPU. Scorsolini-Comin, F. (2015). <i>Aconselhamento psicológico: Aplicações em gestão de carreiras, educação e saúde</i> . São Paulo: Atlas. |
| Complementary bibliography | American Counseling Association [ACA] (2005). <i>ACA code of ethics</i> . Washington, DC: Author. Hutz-Midgett, A., & Hutz, C. S. (2012). Counseling in Brazil: Past, present, and future. <i>Journal of Counseling & Development</i> , 90(2), 238-242. Urofsky, R. I. (2013). The council for accreditation of counseling and related educational programs: Promoting quality in counselor education. <i>Journal of Counseling & Development</i> , 91(1), 6-14. |

As can be noted, the delineated objectives are planned to be achieved throughout the development of the subject as a whole. One specific goal, for example, "knowing the characteristics of a supporting relationship" can be explored in one or more classes. Each specific objective can be explored in its own module, for example. The general objective must be included in the classes of the subject, that is, all specific objectives must allow for the general one to be achieved, since it is the whole reason of the discipline. In this particular case, it is: "presenting the student with conditions to reflect on certain aspects of a human relationship and, more specifically, of a supporting relationship". The writing of the objectives should be conducted following the same guidelines as those used in the lesson plan.

Likewise, teaching strategies and evaluation strategies should happen throughout the entire discipline. Certain strategies can be prioritized in one or more classes. Initial classes, for example, can discuss more conceptual content, aiming to provide the student with the instruments needed to follow up with the subject. The last classes may be an important moment to work with more procedural and attitude-related contents, considering that the basic concepts have been acquired and absorbed by the students.

Building teaching and lesson plans involves similar competences, such as the skill to reflect and plan activities and didactic sequences. The teaching plan, however, offers the opportunity to plan an entire

discipline, guided by its syllabus. The syllabus are usually established in the pedagogic projects of the undergraduation and post-graduation courses, and cannot be changed every time the subject is offered, but only when the project is reformulated.

The contents and strategies, however, can be altered according to the feedback received from the students and the evaluations obtained in each offer. Considering basic and complementary bibliographies, even if the professor does not use all the works mentioned in their pedagogical practices, they can offer some type of guide to the student, "in a document that can be consulted throughout the educational process or even after its finished"¹⁶.

Therefore, the teaching plan is, just as the lesson plan, dynamic. Although changes and movements can happen throughout the development of the subject, an evaluative process must take place as it ends, so that its aspects can be matured and improved in a future semester. The professor must pay attention to the fact that each semester offers a specific group of possibilities and limits, since many variables change between them (period of the year, group of students, availability of the professor, extra concurrent activities, institutional aspects, and others).

It stands out that these resources (lesson and teaching plan) have the potential to be dialectic, dynamic and flexible teaching strategies, in the search to adequate the didactic objectives and proposals. Teaching and lesson plans should be considered as dynamic resources, as should teaching itself,

which can contribute for the training of professors that are more reflexive and flexible to change, as well as capable of planning without stifling the propositions and allowing for reviews and reformulations regarding the development of the teaching-learning process itself.

The development of a teaching plan must be also understood as a way to guarantee that the human actions of the professor are more efficient, guiding decision-making and even making it possible for changes in the path taken by the course, adding or resizing content due to any number of conditions. The planning of educational actions and of the teaching learning process, although not the focus of this particular essay, directly guides the discussions regarding the teaching and lesson plans, and must be a constantly fomented aspect during post-graduation, improving the education of professors for higher education.

Regarding professor practice, these plans can be important elements in the dialogue with the students, showing themselves to be not only documents that prove or regulate their actions. After the understanding of these resources is broadened and they are perceived as didactic strategies, it becomes valid to resort to them as tools to improve teaching activities - which can and should be more and more discussed in the post-graduation programs and in the subjects targeted at professor education. The experience reported here, therefore, seems to suggest this possibility in higher education teaching.

Reflections on teaching are also important. The reflexive professor cannot be a self-contained concept, individual; it must be a proposal of education that extends through time in a collective and dialectic manner⁷. Recognizing the importance of professor training in post-graduation programs seems to be a complex challenge^{2,5}, but answers have been found in the form of enthusiastic initiatives capable of dealing with the demand, as this study indicates.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this essay was to assess the use of lesson plans as resource and teaching strategy in the process of training of professors for higher education. From the experience acquired during the classes of the subject "University and Teaching" in the Psychology Post-graduate Program of the Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro, one can consider that the exercise of writing and planning lessons and subjects is a central aspect in training higher education professors.

Providing the students with tools for this end is extremely important, so that the need to prepare to perform teaching activities become clear, as opposed to the idea that teaching abilities are something that come naturally to the professional after they finish a master's degree or PhD course. It is important, therefore, to promote professor education through these discussions and educational exercises. The results of this experience still need to be evaluated in short, medium and long-terms, but the proposal is expected to provoke important reflections among professors and post-graduation program coordinators.

Finally, it can be concluded that both lesson and teaching plans cannot be perceived and considered as stifled and immutable documents, but, instead, they should guide the planning of the programmed content and work, simultaneously, as a didactic strategy that moves and changes with the class and the subject. It is a possibility of constant dialogue between the content and its practical execution, which can change according to the characteristics of the professor, of the students, and of the subject being taught. During their training, professors must dialogue with these resources, which are potent strategies to conduct the teaching/learning processes.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

Fabio Scorsolini-Comin was responsible for all parts of the study, including planning, writing and reviewing.

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