

Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan

Text: Slowness from *A Philosophy of Walking* by Frédéric Gros

Grade/Subject: MS/HS/Adult General

Ideas, Values: **Perspective**, **Change**, Mind, Philosophy, Time

Date of Origin: 11/11/2021

Pre-Seminar Content

Launch Activity:

Have all participants draft a list of things in which they consider what activities are best done slowly and give at least one example of something they believe they do too quickly. Discuss in table groups; list tasks and activities that are best done slowly and quickly.

Inspectional Read:

Distribute the text and ask participants to number the paragraphs for quick reference (1-7). Have them read the text for the first time and identify any unfamiliar words or phrases.

Background Information:

Frédéric Gros is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris XII and the Institute of Political Studies, Paris. He was the editor of the last lectures of Michel Foucault at the Collège de France. He has written books on psychiatry, law, and war as well as the best-selling *Philosophy of Walking*. He lives in Paris. “Philosopher Gros ponders walking, that most mundane mode of transportation or exercise, elevating it to its rightful place in inspiring creativity, evoking freedom, and quieting a troubled soul.”–Booklist

Vocabulary:

Have participants identify all unfamiliar words or phrases. Provide meanings of unknown words to understand the vocabulary and any contextual implications.

Analytical Read:

Post directions for participants:

Mark phrases of interest and intrigue.

Working independently to consider how the text is organized and why.

Mark any patterns you see.

Note the two most valuable examples of slowness.

Turn and talk with a neighbor, sharing which example is “strongest.”

Read the text again in table groups.

Pre-Seminar Process:

* Define and state the purpose of the seminar.

*“A Paideia seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open ended questions.*

*“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.*

* Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.

“*I am primarily responsible for asking challenging, open-ended questions, and I will take a variety of notes to keep up with the talk turns and flow of ideas. I will help move the discussion along in a productive direction by asking follow-up questions based on my notes. “I am asking you to think, listen and speak candidly about your thoughts, reactions and ideas. You can help each other do this by using each other’s names.*

*“You do not need to raise your hands in order to speak, rather, the discussion is collaborative in that you try to stay focused on the main speaker and wait your turn to talk.*

*“You should try to both agree and disagree in a courteous, thoughtful manner. For example, you might say, ‘I disagree with Joanna because…,’ focusing on the ideas involved not the individuals.*

* Have participants set a Personal Goal.

*“Now, please reflect on how you normally participate in a discussion as a group. What goal can you set for yourself that will help the flow and meaning of the seminar? “Please consider the list of personal participation goals –* either on the Speaking and Listening Checklist or on the board*.”*

* To speak at least three times
* To refer to the text
* To ask a question
* To speak out of uncertainty
* To build on others’ comments

*“Is there one that is relevant for you? Please choose one goal from the list or that you feel is best and commit to achieving it during the discussion we are about to have… write down (or circle) your personal goal.”*

* Agree on a Group Goal.

*For this seminar, I will suggest our group goal (select display for all to see).*

Seminar Questions:

* Opening (Identify main ideas from the text):
* Name one word (other than *slow*) to describe the central message of the text (round-robin response: have a volunteer list the responses on the board).
* Why did you select the word you shared? (spontaneous discussion)
* Core (Analyze textual details):
* Why does Gros make mention of being “taught” to walk for the sake of brevity and effect? (first sentence/third paragraph)

* In the fourth paragraph, Gros states, “a sort of slowness that isn’t exactly the opposite of speed.” Based on the text, what do you think he meant? Do you agree?
* In the first sentence of the seventh paragraph, Gros shares that “Slowness means cleaving perfectly to time, so closely that the seconds fall one by one, drop by drop like the steady dripping of a tap on stone.” What do you think he means? What are the implications of this idea outside of walking?
* Based on the text, what happens when we slow down? Where do you see evidence of this?
* Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):
* What lesson(s) will *you* take away from our discussion about when we should slow down? How do these lessons differ personally vs. professionally?

Post-Seminar Process:

*“Thank you for your focused and thoughtful participation in our seminar”.*

* Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal goal.

*“As part of the post-seminar process, I would first like to ask you to take a few minutes to reflect on your relative success in meeting the personal process goal you set prior to beginning the discussion. Please review the goal you set for yourself and reflect in writing to what extent you met the goal. In addition, note why you think you performed as you did”. (Pause for reflection.)*

* Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of the seminar.

*“Now I would like us to talk together about how we did in relation to the group goal we set for ourselves (insert your group goal). On a scale of one to five, five being perfect, how would you say we did? Why?” (Pause for discussion.)*

*“Now, would someone be willing to (volunteer) to share your personal self-assessment and reflection?”*

* Note reminders for the next seminar.

Post Seminar Content:

* Transition to Writing:

Have participants make note of the key ideas said, heard, or thought during the seminar about the nature of slowness.

* Writing Task:

After reading and discussing Slowness from *A Philosophy of Walking* by Fre’de’ric Gros*,* draft a plan of action to slow down in an area of your personal or professional life.

* Brainstorm:

Have learners work in small groups or pairs to share ideas for how to address the writing activity, bringing together their interpretations of the text.

* Structure the Writing:

Ask learners to carefully map out their writing using an organizer for content and development. Provide support as needed to ensure that participants pay close attention to the ideas and values associated with the text and the goals of slowing down.

* First Draft:

Have participants write their plan of action to slow down in an area of life. Go into the kind of detail that would convince even someone skeptical of slowing down to be open to a change of mind.

* Collaborative Revision:

Have participants work in pairs to read their first drafts aloud to each other with emphasis on the reader as creator and editor. The listener says back one point heard clearly and asks one question for clarification. Switch roles. Give time for full revisions resulting in a second draft.

* Edit:

Once the second draft is complete, have participants work in groups of three-four and take turns reading each other’s second drafts. Give time for complete revisions resulting in a third and final draft for publication.

* Publish:

Have the participants share their plans of action in groups and discuss what collective changes are most needed at your school or classroom. Then have each group share out their recommendations with the entire faculty. From the recommendations, draft a list of “slowness” changes for your school community, and then design the strategic process by which they can realistically be introduced.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

 Name: Jeremy Spielman

 Organization: National Paideia Center

\*Text is attached if open sourced.

\*Text is cited if it needs to be procured.

https://www.google.com/books/edition/A\_Philosophy\_of\_Walking/9blvDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

(Pages 35-38)