

# The Allen Plan As Applied In The Teaching Of Trade And Industrial Subjects<sup>1</sup>

FERMIN TARUC  
*Principal*

Iloilo School of Arts and Trades

Undoubtedly, one of the most popular teaching procedures that has come to be used in the teaching of trade and industrial subjects is what is commonly known to vocational teachers as the Allen Plan, a modified form of the standard Herbartian Plan. In this (Allen) plan, instead of using the original five steps in the Herbartian method, only four are used; *preparation, presentation application, and testing.*

## THE FOUR STEPS BRIEFLY EXPLAINED

**THE PREPARATION STEP—**  
The purpose of the teacher in this step is "to get the learners ready to be instructed" by making them recall those things which the teacher believes can serve as a foundation for teaching the new ideas which he intends to "put over" in the new lessons.

In this step, according to Allen, the instructor, in some way, makes the learner think about certain particular things which will aid him in comprehending the particular new thing which is to be taught. This may be called a process whereby the learner is led to establish in his own mind "contact points" between what he already knows and the new idea which the instructor plans to have him add to what he knows through the lesson that is to be taught.

It is important for the teacher to remember that the success of the step that follows (presentation) depends upon how thoroughly this first step can be carried out. There are cases when it is not easy to tell just when the learners are prepared and therefore ready for the new lessons. When this happens, the teacher will do well not to take chances. It is better for the students to be over-prepared than for the teacher to venture on presenting the new lessons without being sure of having given the students adequate preparation.

**B. PRESENTATION—**As soon as the teacher feels that the students are ready to be instructed, i. e., as soon as they have been placed in a state of readiness to receive the new ideas, he presents the new lesson or idea which he intends to teach.

In this step, the teacher's main purpose is "to add the new ideas embodied in the aims of the lesson to those which the learner already knows and can do." This is usually accomplished by means of *telling and showing.* The teacher first explains what an auxiliary view is and how it differs from the ordinary view in a third angle projection. He then proceeds to show how the auxiliary view is drawn. He does this by means of the demonstration method, i. e., by showing to the learners, step by step, how the auxiliary view is projected

<sup>1</sup>—Charles, A. Allen, *The Instructor, The Man, and the Job*, Chapter XX, p. 140.

and drawn from the other views of the object.

*The Demonstration Method*—When the aim of the lesson, as in the accompanying illustration, is to instruct a learner how to do a piece of job correctly, one of the best known methods that has been found very effective is demonstration. This method is based upon the theory that an individual will attempt to do what he sees others do. Bennet in his book *THE MANUAL ARTS*, page 103, explains this method briefly as follows:

Show the pupil how to do something by doing in his presence. Explain to him every step in the process which he does not know. Tell him why every step should be taken in a certain way. Explain any theory involved; answer his questions. Then tell him to do it himself.

C. *APPLICATION* — In the preceding step the students were *told* and *shown* what auxiliary views are and how they are drawn. But since merely *telling* and *showing*, according to Allen, although often necessary part of the instructing process, they do not in themselves constitute real instruction. By merely telling a learner something and showing him how that particular thing is done does not necessarily follow that he knows and can do that thing. This step, therefore, is employed by the teacher for the purpose of giving the learners a chance to apply what was told and shown to them in the presentation step.

*The Boardwork*—The purpose of the boardwork which, in this particular example we may call the pre-application step, is to supplement the teacher's demonstration and to provide an opportunity for him to check which portion or por-

tions in his demonstrations were not thoroughly understood by the students. Since boardwork, like the teacher's demonstration, is performed within the sight of the whole class the duller students who may not have been able to grasp certain steps in the teacher's demonstration will be benefited by the performance of their fellow students. The alert teacher can make very good use of this procedure by re-emphasizing those key points which such a procedure may reveal which are not clearly understood by some members of the class. Boardwork also, if properly carried out, will reduce to the minimum wrong impressions and thus enable the students to proceed to their work (in the application proper) with greater confidence.

In woodbench where the aim, for example, is to enable the learner to plane a surface true, instead of the boardwork employed in this illustration, a number of students may be made to perform before the class the same operation in planing which has been demonstrated by the teacher.

The question is sometimes raised as to whether or not this procedure may be rightly considered a part of the application step. It is alleged that since it is merely a repetition of the teacher's demonstration, it may properly be a part of the presentation step. The writer is of the opinion that although this procedure duplicates in some way the teacher's demonstration, the fact that the students are the ones performing the work as shown to them by the teacher, it may justly fall under the application step. Moreover, while this procedure may accomplish the same purpose which the teacher

aims to attain in the presentation step, its usefulness lies in the fact that it provides the teacher with an opportunity to gauge the reaction of the students to his demonstration. In order to distinguish this step from the application proper, we may call it the pre-application step.

2. *The Application Proper* — This step may be distinguished from the pre-application step by the fact that while in the latter only some members of the class are called upon to perform the work for the whole class, in the former, every member of the class is given a job which call for the application of the things presented by the teacher in the preceding step. During the process of application, as every member of the class works in his assigned task, the teacher goes around to check up errors, notes where the students may have failed to grasp certain points in the demonstration, and gives addition instruction on that particular thing. His purpose is not only to give the learner training in applying, but also to find weak points in the man's knowledge or comprehension of the subject of the lesson. At the close of this step the instructor should be sure that the man has thoroughly "got" the lesson which is to be taught. The carrying out of this step effectively requires care and skill on the part of the instructor to determine *just when to assist the learner* and just how to assist him; but in no case should the instructor do the work for the man. Of course, he might show him some particular step in the process which he did not understand, but the man should be required to go through the whole job and to go through

it a sufficient number of times so that the instructor is reasonably sure that all points have been mastered.

D. *TESTING*—In trade and industrial teaching, the work on any particular lesson or unit does not generally end with the conclusion of the day's lesson no matter how satisfactory the result of the testing may have been. In vocational training, perhaps more than in any other phase of our educational work, repetitive training is necessary in order to fix right habits of doing and thinking. In this particular example, the whole lesson was given as an introduction to the work that must follow the unit. The testing step is employed by the teacher merely as a means of finding out how effective this introductory lesson has been. In order to develop greater skill in performing the operations which the teacher wishes the students to master, additional jobs or projects involving these operations should be given during the next few days. The work is in reality a continuation of the application step and should be treated as such by the teacher. The length of the time will, of course, depend upon the individual abilities of the students.

While in the application step the student is assisted or directed by the teacher whenever such further help is found necessary, in the testing step *the student is left to do the entire job alone*. In this step, "the instructor must now stop being an instructor and, becoming an inspector, proceeds to inspect the results of his teaching by testing in some suitable way, the ability of the learner to do the job alone."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>—Charles R. Allen, *The Instructor, The man, and the Job*, p. 142.