Planning for What Kind of Teaching?
Supporting Cooperating Teachers as Teachers of Planning

By Patricia J. Norman

Models of preservice teacher education that include year-long internships require classroom teachers who serve as school-based teacher educators to "bear a large burden for beginning teacher growth" (Bullough Jr., R. & Draper, R., 2004, p. 409). The success of field-based internships rests on cooperating teachers' ability to view teacher candidates as learners of teaching and themselves as teachers of teaching. This means that preservice mentors not only understand the content to be taught—the learning to teach "curriculum"—but also are able to design learning opportunities based on knowledge of their intern and what she needs to learn (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Tomlinson, 1995). A core component of that curriculum of learning to teach is instructional planning. Considered a core task in "the work of teaching" (Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 497), planning is often identified in university teacher preparation standards, state teacher certification standards, and more general standards for professional practice such as those developed by The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC).

Patricia J. Norman is an associate professor in the Department of Education at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas.

While most teacher candidates receive some university support in learning to plan, much of their learning occurs during student teaching or internships where novices plan particular content for a particular group of students under the guidance of an experienced classroom teacher who has practical knowledge of the

context, curriculum and learners. Oftentimes, however, mentor teachers do not view themselves as teachers of planning or understand what teaching planning entails. Thus being a strong teacher of children does not automatically translate into the necessary skills needed to carry out the role of school-based teacher educator (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Koerner, 1992).

Historically, cooperating teachers have received little formal preparation for their role (Sparks & Brodeur, 1987). In their recent study of the student teaching experience, Valencia, Martin, Place, and Grossman (2009) found that as both classroom teachers and mentors, the cooperating teachers "were given little support or training in how to serve these dual roles" (p. 318). Thus cooperating teachers must continue to figure out for themselves what they are supposed to do when working with interns (Abell et al, 1995). Because experience has been their best teacher and they have "learned the ropes" on their own (Lortie, 1975), cooperating teachers may believe that they should stay out of the way so that novices can demonstrate their know-how (Feiman-Nemser & Beasley, 1996). By underestimating the guidance that novices need in learning to plan, cooperating teachers may not give interns access to the intellectual work that they engage in while planning for student learning. In addition, they may not provide guided support to novices in developing plans of their own.

To complicate matters, the roles and expectations not only of the cooperating teacher, but also the novice and university supervisor are often unclear (Slick, 1997). Negotiating the triadic relationship between mentor, student teacher, and university supervisor is fraught with tensions including power and position. In their examination of one such "failed" triadic relationship, Bullough and Draper (2004) describe the competing and conflicting expectations that the novice, mentor teacher, and university supervisor held of one another. Without making their underlying beliefs about each other's roles and practices explicit, their lack of effective communication—a well-documented problem between cooperating teachers and university supervisors (Beck & Kosnik, 2002)—led to a breakdown in their relationships.

Planning is a central task of teaching and a central focus in learning to teach. But what does planning entail, and how is planning best learned? What challenges do experienced teachers serving as school-based teacher educators face in becoming teachers of planning? What role can university teacher educators play in helping mentor teachers learn to teach planning? As John (2006) notes, "How to plan well remains a knotty but crucial topic for teacher education research and practice" (p. 495). This article examines these questions by drawing on empirical data from a larger study where I examined how to reconfigure my role as a university field supervisor to support classroom teachers in learning the practice of field-based teacher education over a one-year period.

The Study's Context

For seven years I taught in a five-year teacher preparation program in a large

Midwestern university. Designed to help preservice teachers integrate theory and practice, the program is intended to foster a democratic commitment to teaching all students, an inquiry-based approach to "teaching for understanding," and a commitment to creating learning communities in classrooms and schools. During the fifth year, teacher candidates complete a year-long internship with a single classroom teacher (e.g., collaborating teacher) where they are supported in blending teaching experience with inquiry and reflection. Interns are placed in small clusters of six to eight per school building. Ideally, collaborating teachers assume major responsibility for guiding, supporting, and assessing interns' learning to teach across the year. They are expected to view their intern as a learner, someone who is learning how to teach rather than simply demonstrating her know-how. Collaborating teachers' responsibilities fall into three broad categories: helping interns prepare for teaching; guiding interns' teaching; and supporting interns' efforts to reflect on and learn from their own and the mentor's teaching.

I served as a university liaison in the teacher preparation program. Liaisons work in a single school building with six to eight interns. Liaisons' responsibilities fall into two major categories: supporting interns in their efforts to learn to teach, and supporting collaborating teachers in their efforts to mentor interns. My liaison work was at Sandburg Elementary School,[1] located in a rural community 15 miles from the university, which served as the specific site for this study. I served as liaison at Sandburg for three years. In the first year, I established relationships with the collaborating teachers and learned about the school context while supporting the interns placed at the school. In the second year, I formally invited the six collaborating teachers working with interns at Sandburg to participate in a year-long study designed to explore new roles and practices for university and school-based teacher educators. Thus the collaborating teachers and I served as primary participants. The six interns placed with the six collaborating teachers were part of the study tangentially since my work with the collaborating teachers centered on helping them mentor their intern. All six collaborating teachers (CTs) had taught for at least 12 years, most of them at Sandburg, and all had served as CTs the previous year.

Believing that collaborating teachers are well positioned to teach planning, I established a collaborating teacher study group where we met once or twice a month. We engaged in two tasks designed to examine and strengthen how the CTs supported and assessed interns' learning to teach. First, we clarified what we wanted our interns to know or be able to do at the end of the internship, in essence defining a curriculum for interns' learning to teach. We approached this task by identifying what as veteran teachers they already knew about core aspects of teaching, including planning. Second, we examined how to help interns develop specific knowledge, skills and dispositions by studying our own mentoring practice.

The collaborating teacher study group created a context for the teachers' professional learning that contrasted sharply from professional norms in schools and conventional forms of teacher development. The social organization of schools and

professional norms of politeness and non-interference often leave teachers isolated in the privacy of their own classrooms (Lortie, 1975). This means that teachers rarely have opportunities to observe colleagues teach or to talk collaboratively about teaching in sustained and rigorous ways (Little, 1993). I hoped that the collaborating teacher study group would help us enter into what Little (1987) calls "joint work"—thoughtful and enduring interactions that "induce mutual obligation [and] expose the work of each person to the scrutiny of others" (p. 512). Rather than acting as a support group where educators swap stories or offer moral support, I envisioned the collaborating teacher study group as a context where we publicly disclosed our questions and dilemmas in supporting interns' learning to teach. I hoped that we would learn to engage in "critical colleagueship" (Lord, 1994), an inquiry-oriented, practice-based, self-disclosing form of conversation where participants raise questions about and carefully examine each other's practices while sustaining high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty. Learning *how* to foster passionate, sustained and self-disclosing conversation within the study group became an ongoing challenge for me.

Methodology

Drawing on Brown's (1992) notion of "design experiment, " I attempted to "engineer innovative environments and simultaneously conduct experimental studies of these innovations" (p. 151). By creating, facilitating and studying our work in the mentor teacher study group, I examined not only my efforts to support the collaborating teachers but also their efforts to learn the practice of mentoring.

Studying our practices as university and school-based teacher educators generated knowledge in two different domains—local knowledge and public knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). By "local knowledge," we developed context-specific knowledge that grew out of our own efforts to support the interns' learning at our school. We acted on that knowledge in the moment and over time. In addition, systematically studying the mentor study group sessions once they had ended enabled me to identify core challenges that both the mentors and I faced as school-based teacher educators. Sharing these findings with a wider scholarly audience generated "public knowledge."

I audio-taped the 19 mentor teacher study group sessions held during the school year, kept field notes and collected written documents related to each study group session (e.g., writing the CTs completed in response to specific tasks I posed and memos that outlined upcoming sessions or summarized key ideas from previous interactions). In addition, I held formal interviews with the six collaborating teachers near the end of the study that focused on their beliefs about good teaching and mentoring as well as their experiences as learners of mentoring. I also conducted a group interview with the six teachers where I asked for their feedback about our collective work in the study group.

Data analysis occurred in two phases. Given my commitment to use the study as an opportunity to learn from and improve my practice as a university teacher educator, analysis occurred throughout the data collection year. I immediately transcribed study group sessions that focused on planning then met with university colleagues for support in initially analyzing the discourse. Specifically, I asked my colleagues to help me trace particular ideas that received extended attention during a study group session, and to consider how to frame and facilitate future study group sessions in light of what transpired during the session we analyzed.

These early analytic sessions helped me evaluate my practice as the "researched." But I also had to move beyond those initial reflections-in-action, re-searching the events captured in order to understand why events unfolded in the way they did rather than simply evaluate my performance. In the year following data collection, I analyzed individual CT study group sessions using a process of "inductive analysis" (Erickson, 1986). After segmenting each session into chunks that marked different phases of our interaction, I examined each chunk in terms of exchanges between participants, paying attention to moves particular participants made, including who initiated topics of conversation, who responded, how and why. After writing narrative accounts of individual sessions, I looked for exchange patterns within and across study group sessions, examining how our conversations unfolded over time. Finally, I solicited several participants' views on the credibility of my analysis by reading and responding to a written draft of my findings. Two of the CTs met with me in person to provide feedback while a third shared her response in writing. In general, the three participants felt that I had accurately described and analyzed our work together.

Several major themes emerged from the analysis of study group sessions. Part of our work in the study group involved *identifying a curriculum for learning to plan*. While we were able to reach consensus quickly, we *lacked a shared vision of the kind of planning and teaching that we expected interns to engage in*. Moreover, we *held divergent ideas about who was responsible for teaching interns to plan and how to do so*.

What Does Good Planning Entail?

The university's professional standards specify what interns should be able to do as planners of instruction: frame worthwhile purposes; gather, assess and adapt a range of curricular resources; check their own subject matter understanding; consider what students already know; and decide how to introduce activities, organize and engage students, and guide and assess their learning. Not wanting to assume that the collaborating teachers shared this vision of good planning, I invited them to consider how they themselves plan by asking, "What does good planning entail? What do you have to consider when you're creating a lesson plan?" After jotting down their individual thoughts, their lively conversation generated a list of 26 different aspects of planning which I later organized around three central themes:

(1) getting inside the content; (2) considering the students; and (3) mapping out the actual lesson. Considering how the content fits into the larger curriculum and relates to students' lives, strengthening one's own content knowledge, determining what students already know, choosing activities linked to stated purposes, and mapping out the nitty-gritty details (e.g., introduction, materials, directions, closure, assessment) were all aspects of planning the CTs mentioned.

Several commented on the remarkable similarity in their ideas about planning. The tone of their comments was one of surprise and pleasure. One teacher noted, "When you compare our lists, they used different words but it was the same ideas." I had been struck by the similarities between their own vision of good planning and the program's and was excited about these parallels and the collaborating teachers' apparent consensus. In retrospect, however, our conversation suggests a kind of premature consensus that shadowed real differences in what kind of planning we expected interns to complete and who was responsible for teaching planning to novices.

Planning for What Kind of Teaching?

An ongoing tension that arose in the collaborating teacher study group was the question of what kind of teaching interns were planning for. The university's teacher preparation program viewed instruction as inherently unpredictable, uncertain, and messy in nature. Teachers must be able to draw on their knowledge of students, content, and pedagogy when entering into complex, unpredictable interactions with a particular group of children around a particular concept given a particular context (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Ball & Forzani, 2009). In other words, teaching depends on being able to "make reasoned judgments in the context of action" (Lampert & Ball, 1998, p. 29). The teacher preparation program embraced a vision of teaching that is simultaneously content-rich while also attending to the needs, interests, and capacities of students. Teachers pose problems of immediate or emerging relevance to students, structure learning opportunities around core concepts that extend across the curriculum, and seek out, value, and use children's present conceptions and ideas to help them develop deeper subject matter understanding (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

Such a vision of good teaching has implications for planning. Yinger (1993) argues that teaching involves two related aspects of practice: *performance* and *consideration*. Performance encompasses "the doing, the enacting, the accomplishment of practical action" whereas consideration refers to "careful thought and attention directed toward past and future performance conducted apart from the immediacy and demands of actual performance" (p. 83). Yinger notes that consideration often occurs when *planning* before teaching and *reflecting* after teaching. Performance occurs when *implementing* one's plans.

This *planning-implementation-reflection* cycle, based on a rational model associated with Tyler (1949), has dominated normative thinking about instructional

planning. First, the practitioner identifies educational purposes based on perceived student needs. Next, she considers what learning activities will help children achieve those goals, choosing the best alternative given her desired goals and outcomes. Once the educational experiences are chosen, the teacher considers how they can be effectively organized. Finally, she develops a means to assess whether her purposes have been attained. This four-step linear model allows teachers to deal with uncertainty by seeking to eliminate it through controlled action.

The model, however, falsely separates the interactive processes of consideration and performance (Yinger, 1993). Teaching is inherently uncertain and unpredictable. While a teacher can plan what questions to ask, for example, she can never know with certainty what ideas such questions will elicit from students nor how she will respond in the moment in order to probe students' thinking. In order to acknowledge the essence of good teaching, responsiveness to students, Yinger offers an alternative framework: *preparation, improvisation,* and *contemplation*. Unlike planning where the goal is to avoid the unpredictable, preparation recognizes that a certain amount of uncertainty is not only inevitable but also desirable during performance. Preparation, then, involves getting ready, becoming receptive, equipping oneself. Preparation invites possibility rather than attempting to constrain it. Yinger points out that to adopt a stance of preparation rather than planning does not mean that one never considers the future. Rather, consideration is carried out with a stance of responsiveness rather than with the desire strictly to implement. Every teacher both prepares and plans, implements and improvises, reflects and contemplates. The difference lies in how she defines good teaching. For Yinger, teaching is about skilled performance "that is especially sensitive to moment and place" (p. 85) meaning that the teacher is responsive to the content being learned, the context in which it is learned, and the students themselves.

The university's teacher preparation program shared Yinger's vision of good teaching where teachers are responsive in the moment to students' questions, ideas, and confusions. As we began to discuss planning and learning to plan in the collaborating teacher study group, the teachers' ideas about preparation and improvisation seemed to resonate with Yinger's, noting that teachers must be responsive in the moment and willing to veer from their plans. For example, Peggy stated, "Some of the things I do say up there are on the fly. They just come to me. Some examples I just pull in from my own life or from something I read in the paper, and it isn't planned. But I can improvise." When Sandy asserted that you must be willing to abandon lessons that are not going well, her colleagues strongly agreed.

> *Sandy*: Sometimes you plan a lesson and it's just not going and you cut your losses, like okay, this is it.
>
> *Peggy*: Might as well put this away! This was way too hard.
>
> *Kelly*: I'm honest with the kids, [saying] this didn't work because of this, and we learn from that and we use flexibility.

Peggy: I think the interns want to follow their plan.

Shelly: Like Bonnie said, you've got to have Plan B and sometimes you need Plan C.

While the collaborating teachers noted the importance of flexibility and improvisation while teaching, their notion of being responsive in the moment had more to do with whether or not a lesson was "working" than how to be responsive to students' thinking. Certainly the program, like the CTs, expected interns to be willing to veer from their plans based on how the lesson unfolded, but the program also expected interns to consider how to elicit and respond to students' ideas.

Further evidence that the collaborating teachers' vision of good teaching differed from the university's vision surfaced as interns received planning support in university-based graduate coursework. Throughout their internship, interns received guidance from university faculty in planning a literacy unit "from scratch" based on district, state and national curriculum standards, adapting a mathematics unit using high-quality published curricular materials chosen by the university teacher educator, and designing a science unit based on the conceptual change model of instruction. In particular, the university science methods instructor had organized her graduate course around the conceptual change model of instruction[2] and expected interns to try to enact it. Tensions arose as the interns tried to negotiate what and how to teach in ways that satisfied both their collaborating teacher and university instructor.

When the Sandburg interns attempted to clarify the content they would teach during a two-week science unit, several CTs voiced concerns that the interns were focusing their units too narrowly on a single concept. The teachers felt pressure to "cover so much" that they could not justify having the interns spend two weeks "on one thing."

Bonnie: [My intern] picked the solar system. But now her instructor said that what I'm asking her to teach about the solar system is too broad. But these are all the things that *I* have always done. She wants her to just focus in on one thing. That might be all right for that two-week period but you still have to hit on all of these other areas too… We have so many things to get done that you can't take a block of time like that.

Mary: One concept.

Shelly: When you look at what we have done with our curriculum in the last five years—and everyone is feeling this right now—is that I am being asked to cover so much that you don't have two weeks to devote to one concept.

Unlike the interns' university course instructor who expected them to help students develop conceptual understanding, their collaborating teachers expressed feeling pressure to cover the curriculum due to recent accountability measures. This pressure led them to expect the interns to engage in similar planning and teaching practices. Such an approach to curricular planning, however, often leads teachers

to march through large amounts of information without helping students grapple with such questions as: "what's the point? What's the big idea here? What does this help us understand or be able to do? …Why should we learn this?" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 16).

Who Is Responsible for Teaching Interns to Plan?

As the collaborating teachers came to see that interns needed greater support in learning how to plan, we grappled with the question of who is responsible to teach it. Some felt that the interns could teach themselves simply by observing their mentor. For example, Shelly stated that interns

> have to know, at this point, they've been with us, that we are not pulling this out of the air. We are not teaching off the tops of our head.

Her comment suggests an assumption that even though an intern may not see how her collaborating teacher prepares to teach, the mentor's plan should be obvious to the intern as she observes her mentor teach.

Mary made a similar comment after watching a video clip of an intern who had not gained the students' attention before launching her lesson.

> *Mary*: What happened two months ago right at the beginning when the [intern's mentor] teacher got up there and the first thing she did was get the class quiet and get the class's attention and "hook" them? I mean, she should have seen that several times. So it's kind of a surprise that she jumped into the lesson like that.
>
> *Sandy*: But unless you discuss it, that's one of those assumptions we make. When I talked to my intern, I guess I made a lot of assumptions that she would know to get their attention first.

Mary's comment suggests several underlying assumptions. First, an intern is able to notice discrete pedagogical moves when observing her mentor. Second, an intern knows that when planning, she should consider how to perform similar moves such as how to "get the class's attention". Third, an intern has strategies to draw from when planning discrete pedagogical moves in her lessons. Sandy challenged Mary's stance that interns should simply know how to plan the opening of a lesson from watching what they as experienced teachers do. She pointed out that she herself had made similar erroneous assumptions about what her own intern had learned from watching Sandy's teaching.

Some collaborating teachers believed the university was responsible to teach planning before teacher candidates began the internship or that I as the university liaison should assist them during their internship experience. For example, when Kelly realized that the interns learned about planning in undergraduate courses but that the program did not require teacher candidates to use a single lesson plan format, she stated,

> I thought that they just came from the university with one that they were trained in using. I know at Central University they do that.

Shelly replied that she "would strongly encourage [the university] to rethink that" stance, suggesting that the responsibility for teaching planning rested with the university and that teaching planning meant training interns in how to use a given format.

Most of our study group conversations about who should teach planning, however, centered on how the collaborating teachers themselves could support the interns in learning to plan. Understanding *that* they had a role to play in helping interns learn to plan did not always help the mentors know *how* to enact that role, however.

Why Is Planning Challenging to Teach Novices?

As the collaborating teachers attempted to support their interns' planning, difficulties surfaced in using the collaborating teacher's planning as a site for her intern's learning as well as supporting the interns in planning for their own teaching.

Using the Mentor's Planning as a Site for the Intern's Learning

Shelly, for example, invited me to sit in on a planning session she held with her intern, Beth. Shelly was developing an upcoming thematic unit on bears in her kindergarten classroom and wanted to help Beth better understand how Shelly approached this task. I had assumed Shelly would actually *do* the planning in front of Beth, naming what she was doing as she did so. However, Shelly talked *about* planning in the abstract by explaining how she plans in general, stating that she begins to plan by consulting district benchmarks which act as a "road map" in order to define her objectives. The resources and benchmark standards were sitting on the table, yet Shelly did not open them or show Beth how she actually makes those choices.

Once Shelly has determined the purposes for her unit, she then "plans" it by gathering curricular resources and "think[ing] about all the content areas and asking yourself, 'how is this information important to a five year old?'" Again, Shelly had gathered a stack of children's books about bears that sat at a nearby table but did not show them to Beth or talk her through how and why she selected them or how she might use them in the unit. Instead she stated, "What specific materials will I need and how will I set up instruction? And what help will students need in learning how to use the materials?"

Shelly's co-planning session stands in stark contrast to one described by Feiman-Nemser and Beasley (1997) in which the mentor, Beasley, assisted her intern's performance by guiding and supporting the intern as they jointly worked on teaching tasks that they both found meaningful and authentic. The authors state that the primary goal of this mentored assistance was to accomplish teaching tasks, not simply to teach the novice. It was through their joint participation that the novice learned. Throughout the planning session, Beth appeared bored and disinterested. She moved farther and farther away from the table and slumped in her chair as Shelly talked at her. While impressed with Shelly's ability to articulate her approach to

planning from scratch, I wondered what impact it may have had on Beth's learning to plan and how much more powerful the experience might have been if Shelly had actually engaged in the authentic task of planning *with* Beth.

Study group sessions revealed additional challenges the mentors faced in making the intellectual work of planning visible to their interns. For example, Peggy noted that since her "units of study have not changed drastically in years," she does not need to engage in extensive planning. Thus she realized that she was not modeling planning for her intern since this was no longer an authentic task for her. Moreover, Bonnie noted that after teaming with her colleague, Mary, for six years, the two of them often plan in only a few minutes, something interns are unable to do.

> *Bonnie*: Mary and I talk about things, and in two or three sentences we fill in each other's endings to our sentence and we've got the lesson planned and we're gone. That's really hard for somebody new.

Bonnie's comment about her ability to plan quickly with Mary resonated with Sandy, who team taught with another mentor. As veteran teachers, they recognized not only can they anticipate what their team teacher is thinking, but also that their few words convey quite a bit of meaning about what they plan to do during a given lesson. Bonnie noted that novices would struggle to understand this "short hand" form of planning.

Complicating matters further was the fact that the collaborating teachers prepared for instruction differently than their interns. Unlike novices, veteran teachers rarely write extensive plans. In her ethnographic study of twelve elementary teachers, McCutcheon (1980) found that they only recorded their planning to meet administrators' demands or create guidelines for substitute teachers. Most teacher planning is done mentally rather than on paper (Morine-Dershimer, 1978). They can rely on mental visualization and a few jotted notes in their lesson plan book to prepare them for teaching. Simply recording "Math, pp. 110-112; Questions 3-9" in a lesson plan book serves to jog a veteran teacher's memory and enables her to figure out the details as she teaches.

While experienced teachers can often "schedule" activities by recording a few sparse details, novices lack well-developed ways of thinking about teaching, students and subject matter. The same notes for math instruction do not trigger bigger ideas about lessons or pedagogy. Understandably, novices need to spend more time getting ready to teach lessons so that over time this form of preparation can become a mental habit. Because interns need to plan much more explicitly when preparing for instruction, teaching planning requires mentors to plan in ways they normally do not engage in.

Even if experienced teachers thoughtfully plan for students' learning over time, their practical knowledge is embedded in their action (Leinhardt, 1988) as they draw on their knowledge of students, context, content and pedagogy to develop a mental picture of what a lesson will look like (Clark & Yinger, 1979). Oftentimes

unaware of their approach to planning and the intellectual work they put into this task, mentors may not know how to make their planning efforts visible to a novice. Thus interns may lack access to the ways their mentors prepare for instruction.

This was true of the Sandburg collaborating teachers. Over time they became more aware that the way they plan as experienced teachers is an insufficient form of preparation for interns. For example, Peggy remarked that when they themselves were prospective and beginning teachers, writing "hundreds of lesson plans" enabled them over time to do that kind of preparation in their head rather than on paper.

> *Peggy*: Do you know how many hundreds of lesson plans we had to write?
>
> *Shelly*: We had to script everything.
>
> *Peggy*: But do you see what I mean? That gave us the background. And later, then you get to where you can do the planning in your head because you have done so many written plans… I guess that's a problem, too. I'm probably not modeling it enough because so much of it comes out of my head.

Peggy recognized that because she no longer needs to plan on paper, she has not demonstrated the intellectual work of planning for her intern since so much of it occurs "in her head."

As a further example, in a separate study group session Peggy described an incident where she had designed a science lesson she expected her intern, John, to teach while she was out of the classroom. After he taught this lesson, Peggy taught the same lesson to a different fifth grade class with much different results which prompted to her to think about why.

> *Peggy*: When we were gone last Monday, my science class was playing a game. I tried to tell John some of the things to anticipate with playing a game. I walked back in and said 'how did it go?' and he said it was chaos. Yet when I did it with Tanya's class following the same general guidelines—now maybe I hadn't been specific enough. I asked him over and over 'are you set? Do you know what you're going to do?' I don't think it was specific enough for him to follow. Tanya's class did it. And he walked in and I said to him later on, 'did you notice a difference?' and he said 'yeah, they were really under control.' So I think that he thought he'd planned it out in his head. But nothing had gotten written down. And I think he thinks he can do that if they're my lesson plans… But my lesson plans aren't detailed enough for him.
>
> *Liaison*: As a novice, he cannot pull off what you can in a few notes to yourself.
>
> *Peggy*: So maybe I should have written them more detailed to give to him.

As Peggy recounted what had happened, she seemed to realize that the plans she leaves for herself lacked sufficient detail for her intern and that in the future she should be more explicit if she wants John to teach from her own written plans.

Peggy's experience mirrors that of Feiman-Nemser and Beasley (1996). While planning a wordless picture book activity with her student teacher, the mentor, Kathy

Beasley, made sure her student teacher understood the purposes for using the text. After mapping out the components of the lesson, both felt confident that the student teacher was prepared to teach it. The next day, however, Kathy was surprised how her student teacher "read" the story and how disengaged the students were. After teaching the same lesson herself the next day, Kathy realized that she knew a lot about *how* to present a wordless picture book to children, knowledge she had been unaware of when she had planned with her student teacher the previous day. Because Beasley's extensive practical knowledge was not readily available to her, she underestimated what she knew about teaching and needed to talk about with her student teacher.

In addition to challenges that the mentors encountered using their instructional planning as a site for interns' learning to plan, they also experienced difficulty in supporting interns' own efforts to plan.

Supporting Interns' Planning

After generating our ideas about good planning, we used those ideas to analyze an intern's recent lesson plan. As the CTs recognized how little this intern understood about planning, one mentor suggested that we design a lesson plan format for the interns to follow, reasoning that interns "need a springboard, somewhere to start." Her suggestion led us to generate a set of questions to guide interns' planning. Their collective efforts resulted in the "Sandburg Lesson Plan Format" (see Figure 1) which included key questions organized around two sections: (1) clarifying the content and (2) designing the lesson. Each section contained several subheadings with questions that followed. For example, under "Objectives," two questions were listed to prompt interns' thinking: What do you want the students to learn/understand? and Why is this content important/relevant to them? The following four questions were listed under the subheading "Opening": What signal will you use to get students' attention? How will you 'hook' the students so they want to learn more? How will you connect what you did yesterday to what they will do today? How will you help the students see how the content is relevant to their lives?

After generating this document the collaborating teachers grappled with how to introduce it to their intern. One CT proposed that they themselves first develop a lesson using the format before expecting the interns to use it.

> *Kelly*: We should model writing through one, talking through one with the interns. We could model going through a lesson that we're going to teach so that we're getting those parts in there.

I reinforced Kelly's suggestion, restating that each teacher should develop a lesson using the guiding questions, adding that the interns could use the mentor's plan while observing to note where the mentor had modified her plans in the moment and to underscore the interplay between preparation and improvisation. Everyone agreed to Kelly's proposal.

When the study group met again several weeks later, however, all six collaborating teachers reported that they had not modeled using the questions to guide their planning for their intern's benefit. Moreover, none of the CTs had required the interns' written plans to demonstrate that they had considered the guiding questions. One mentor explained that because "there wasn't a whole lot of interest" from her intern, she "didn't take it further." Another thought the lesson plan format was "optional" for interns so she had not required its use. A third mentor simply stated that her intern "was not using the format."

What might have led every collaborating teacher to veer from what I had believed was our agreed upon plan to introduce the lesson plan format to the interns? Perhaps they were unwilling to use the format to develop an extensive lesson plan because they normally did not engage in this lengthy form of preparation. Sandy seemed to express this sentiment during a later study group session. When Mary

Figure 1
Sandburg Lesson Plan Format

Clarifying the Content

Objective/Purpose
- what do you want the students to learn/understand?
- why is this content important/relevant to them?

Pre-assessment
- how will you find out what the students already know about the content?
- what may be particularly difficult for your students to understand?

How does this content fit into the larger curriculum?

Designing the Lesson

Opening
- what signal will you use to get students' attention?
- how will you "hook" the students so they want to learn more?
- how will you connect what you did yesterday to what they will do today?
- how will you help the students see how the content is relevant to their lives?

Activity/Learning Task
- what is the task?
- directions?
- materials needed?
- specific questions to ask/explanations to give?
- transitions?

Closure
- how will you recap what happened?
- how over time will the students be able to practice and eventually demonstrate what they have learned?

Student Assessment
- how will you find out what the students did/did not understand?
- how will you use that information to modify your instruction?

suggested, as Kelly had earlier, that the interns "need to see us with a lesson plan like the kind we want them to do," Sandy replied, "I don't want to have to do that," perhaps because this kind of planning felt unnecessary and unwarranted.

In addition, Wenger's (1998) notion of "reification" might account for the collaborating teachers' unwillingness and/or inability to follow through on their intent to use the questions to plan a lesson in front of their intern. Wenger defines reification as "the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into 'thingness'" (p. 58). When a community of practice engages in reification, they give form to their understood experience by producing some thing be it a tool, a representation, a procedure, etc. Wenger notes that the meaning of that artifact is not embedded in the thing itself. Rather, an artifact's real meaning and power lies in members using that artifact in their ongoing practice. In other words, the process of reification should lead to further negotiated action which in turn leads to additional reification of those experiences into artifacts.

While the process of reification can be a powerful tool for negotiating meaning among group members, it can also pose a danger. The ability to organize and succinctly capture a group's experience can "lead to the illusion that one fully understands the processes it describes" (Wenger, 1998, p. 61). Thus reification prevails at the expense of using those materials/artifacts in practice to generate further meaning. The process of reification enabled the collaborating teachers to consolidate their experiences and understanding of lesson planning into a document; however, it is unclear how the understanding embedded in the format captured their actual practice as planners.

Perhaps lacking a deeper understanding of what planning entails beyond naming key components in the process, the mentors may not have been able to carry the document into their work as instructional planners and/or teachers of planning. There is some evidence to suggest that their espoused beliefs about good planning did not mirror how they actually approached this task. For example, while discussing the importance of helping interns frame worthwhile purposes, Peggy remarked, "Unfortunately very often the reason we're teaching something is because that's what is taught in the fifth grade." This is a sentiment that I often heard Peggy share with her intern. For Peggy, it may have been reason enough to teach something because it was dictated through district frameworks. However, the planning format required interns to go beyond this stance and grapple with the question, "Why is this content relevant/important to students?" Thus using the planning format to design a lesson in front of her intern might have forced Peggy to grapple with questions she usually did not attend to when planning on her own.

Peggy was not the only mentor who may not have thought through some of the very questions she wanted her intern to consider when planning. Bonnie often told her intern that she did not have to plan when using the math and basal reading curriculum guides since everything was already "there." Sandy, too, later connected her intern's struggle to plan with Sandy's own vulnerability as an instructional planner.

When I mentioned that Sandy's intern seemed to plan in terms of activities rather than carefully considering what she wants students to learn from those activities, Sandy quickly responded,

> That's because she was showing you what's been modeled for her… I was always like, "Oh, let's paint pretty pictures." So that's what I really need to work on. You know, this is the objective. How are we going to make sure that they learn this? And how are we going to assess it at the end to be really sure that they have it?… So maybe I need to get better at writing lesson plans. I think she's seen a lot of "Oh, that's a cute activity! I love it. Let's do that."

Thus while our creation of the lesson plan format suggests that the collaborating teachers conceptually understood the components of lesson planning, they may not have consistently addressed such questions in their own planning nor supported their intern in grappling with those questions while she planned for instruction.

Discussion

Decisions I made about how to treat the territory of planning influenced what the study group produced and learned. I put a lot of time and thought into helping the collaborating teachers support interns in learning to plan *lessons* because of observations I had made of the interns' teaching. They either attempted to teach meaningful content but failed to consider ahead of time the nitty-gritty details or they attempted to teach a lesson that lacked a clear, worthwhile purpose. In other words, some of the interns were planning for the "how" of teaching and some were planning for the "what" but few were able to put "how," "what" and "why" together. Zumwalt notes,

> If prospective teachers do not understand that questions of 'what' and 'why' are as central to teaching as the understandably pressing questions of 'how,' not only is the range and quality of their decision making drastically limited, but teaching can easily drift into a meaningless activity, for students as well as for teacher. (1989, p. 174)

The interns often taught from plans that their collaborating teacher had read through and approved of. I wanted to help the CTs consider playing a larger role in helping interns strengthen individual lesson plans *before* interns actually taught from those plans.

University teacher educators often teach lesson planning as a rational, linear process where prospective teachers list educational objectives, procedures for activities, materials and a means of assessment (May, 1986). However, several researchers (e.g., May, 1986; McCutcheon, 1995; Yinger, 1993) have questioned this linear form of planning since "real" teachers rarely develop detailed plans for given lessons. Clark and Peterson (1986) and May (1986) suggest that university teacher educators may need to modify how they describe and teach planning in ways that are more in line with how experienced teachers actually plan.

I believe that novices *do* need help in developing individual lessons. Unlike experienced teachers who can mentally picture what an upcoming lesson will look like (McCutcheon, 1980; McNeil, 1999), novices lack such well-developed schema for imagining lessons. Thus while veteran teachers are able to figure out the details as they teach, making decisions in the moment based on past experience, prospective teachers are not as able to think on their feet. Understandably, teacher candidates need to spend more time getting ready to pull off lessons so that over time this form of preparation can become a mental habit.

At the time I felt justified in my decision to focus on lesson planning. In retrospect, our singular focus had its drawbacks. Nearly 100 years ago, Dewey (1904/1965) challenged the merits of focusing on lesson planning in teacher preparation. He argued that student teachers face two challenges in learning to teach: mastering the curriculum from a pedagogical perspective (e.g.. what is taught, how and why); and mastering classroom management. Dewey warned that novices are often thrown prematurely into the practical work of teaching without first developing the analytic skills needed to study how experienced teachers support children's learning, how teachers elicit and respond to children's questions, ideas and confusions in ways that further their understanding. Without this ability to "see" how teachers establish the objective conditions that support and extend students' "mental play," novices fall into the trap of equating children's outward behavior with learning.

Dewey argued that requiring novices to develop individual lesson plans leads them further away from the "real" work of teaching where a teacher must "build up and modify his plans as he goes along from experience gained in contact with pupils" (1904/1965, p. 317). Designing individual plans keeps the student teacher from gaining a sense of the curricular "big picture." Instead, the novice snatches at bits and pieces of the curriculum she is learning, trying to cram it into discrete lessons without thinking about the conditions that must be present to promote students' intellectual growth. My decision to focus our study group sessions solely on lesson planning meant that we ignored the challenges of planning for students' learning over time.

While the collaborating teachers and I reached some consensus about the components of a strong lesson plan, differences in our conception of good teaching remained unresolved. I believe I avoided directly addressing this tension because I felt ill prepared to negotiate this territory. As the university representative of a program deeply committed to a particular vision of good teaching, I felt this vision was not up for negotiation. At the same time my ideas about what it meant to collaborate with our school partners made me uncomfortable with the expectation to bring the collaborating teachers "on board." Caught between my collaborative stance and belief in the program's views about teaching, I did not know how to reconcile the internal presses to remain true to the program's vision as well as my belief in the power of collaboration and negotiation. Yet leaving our differences unexamined weakened our ability to reach shared understandings.

Implications for Teacher Education

Becoming a teacher of planning requires mentors to possess conceptual and practical knowledge of instructional planning, how novices learn to plan, and how to teach planning. Mentors must not only understand what planning entails but have developed their capacity as instructional planners/curriculum developers. They must possess knowledge of interns as learners of planning and know *how* to use planning—their own and their intern's—as a site for the novice's learning. Furthermore, as this study's findings suggest, mentors must also examine their underlying vision of good teaching in relation to their views about planning.

Given the daunting challenges mentors face in strengthening their capacity to teach planning, the problem then becomes one of helping mentor teachers to develop a new vision for their role as teachers of planning and to expand their capacity in guiding, supporting and assessing interns' learning to plan. Such assistance is not always forthcoming, however. University supervisors and mentors often lack effective communication (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). Even if university teacher educators take seriously the call for preservice mentor teacher development, it is unclear whether and how they can create the structures and learning opportunities necessary to develop mentor teachers' practice at the local level. Most university field-based teacher educators are untrained graduate students or faculty without particular expertise for this kind of work (Lanier & Little, 1985). Thus they may not be well positioned to help experienced teachers both strengthen their capacity to plan content-rich curriculum and teach planning to novices.

If current teacher education reforms are to succeed, we need further experiments that link visions of teaching with views about mentored learning to teach and ideas about mentor teacher development. Conceptualizing further aspects of mentoring practice and examining core challenges mentor teacher developers face in helping mentors become school-based teacher educators are important next steps. Further design experiments such as the one I describe here will not only provide important opportunities for teacher educators to improve their practice but also to better understand how to create more powerful learning opportunities for teacher candidates in year-long internships.

Notes

[1] Pseudonyms are used for the school, teachers, and teacher education students throughout this article.

[2] The conceptual change model of science instruction rests on the belief that students bring their own personal ideas and patterns of thinking about the way the world works to their formal study of science (Smith, 1990). Because these personal understandings are often incomplete and naïve, teachers with a conceptual change orientation must find out student misconceptions, construct learning activities that help children challenge those privately-held ideas, and continually monitor students' current ideas in order to plan additional activities that will support students in developing appropriate scientific conceptions.

References

Abell, S., Dillon, D., Hopkinds, C., McInerney, W., & O'Brien, D. (1995). Somebody to count on: Mentor/intern relationships in a beginning teacher internship program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *11*(2), 173-188.

Ball, D., & Cohen, D. (1999). Developing practice, developing practitioners: Toward a practice-based theory of professional education. In L. Darling-Hammond, G. Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching as the learning profession: Handbook of policy and practice*. (pp. 3-32). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ball, D., & Forzani, F. (2009). The work of teaching and the challenge for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *60*(5), 497-511.

Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2002). Professors and the practicum: Involvement of university faculty in preservice practicum supervision. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *53*, 6-19.

Brown, A. (1992). Design experiments: Theoretical and methodological challenges in creating complex interventions in classroom settings. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *2*, 141-178.

Bullough Jr., R.V., & Draper, R. J. (2004). Making sense of a failed triad: Mentors, university supervisors, and positioning theory. *Journal of Teacher Education, 55*, 407-420.

Clark, C., & Peterson, P. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching*. 3rd edition (pp. 255-296). New York: MacMillan.

Clark, C., & Yinger, R. (1979). *Three studies of teacher planning*. Research Series No. 55. East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, J. (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Dewey, J. (1904/1965). The relation of theory to practice in education. In R. D. Archambault (Ed.), *John Dewey on education*. (pp. 313-338). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1998). Teachers as teacher educators. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *21*(1), 63-74.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Beasley, K. (1996). *Discovering and sharing knowledge: Inventing a new role for cooperating teachers*. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning at Michigan State University.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Remillard, J. (1996). Perspectives on learning to teach. In F. Murray (Ed.), *The teacher educator's handbook: Building a knowledge base for the preparation of teachers* (pp. 63-91). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

John, P. D. (2006). Lesson planning and the student teacher: re-thinking the dominant model. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 38*(4), 483-498.

Koerner, M. (1992). The cooperating teacher: An ambivalent participant in student teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*(1), 46-56.

Lampert, M., & Ball, D. (1998). *Teaching, multimedia and mathematics: Investigations of real practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Lanier, J., & Little, J. (1986). Research on teacher education. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 527-569). New York: Macmillan.

Little, J. W. (1993).Teachers professional development in a climate of educational reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 15*(2), 129-151.

Little, J. W. (1987). Teachers and colleagues. In V. Richardson-Koehler (Ed.), *Educator's handbook: A research perspective.* New York: Longman.

Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

May, W. (1986). Teaching students how to plan: The dominant model and alternatives. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *37*(6), 6-12.

McCutcheon, G. (1980). How do elementary school teachers plan? The nature of planning and influences on it. *Elementary School Journal*, *81*, 4-23.

McLaughlin, M., & Talbert, J. (1993). Introduction: New visions of teaching. In D. Cohen, M. McLaughlin, & J. Talbert (Eds.), *Teaching for understanding: Challenges for policy and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Morine-Dershimer, G. (1978). Planning and classroom reality: An in-depth look. *Educational Research Quarterly*, *3*(4), 83-99.

Slick, S. K. (1997). Assessing versus assisting: The supervisor's role in the complex dynamics of the student teacher triad. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 13,* 713-726.

Smith, E. (1990). Implications of teachers' conceptions of science teaching and learning. In *What research says to the science teacher—the process of knowing*. Arlington, VA: National Science Teachers Association.

Sparks, S., & Brodeur, D. (1987). Orientation and compensation for cooperating teachers. *Teacher Educator*, *23*(1), 2-12.

Tomlinson, P. (1995). *Understanding mentoring: Reflective strategies for school-based teacher preparation*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Valencia, S. W., Martin, S. D., Place, N. A., & Grossman, P. (2009). Complex interactions in student teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*(1), 304-322.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design: Expanded (2nd Ed.)*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Yinger, R. (1993). The conversation of practice. In R. Clift, W. Houtston, & M. Pugach (Eds.), *Encouraging reflective practice in education* (pp. 73-94). New York: Teachers College Press.

Zumwalt, K. (1989). Beginning professional teachers: The need for a curricular vision of teaching. In M. Reynolds, (Ed.), *Knowledge base for the beginning teacher* (pp. 173-184). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.