Instructional Planning through Stories:
Rethinking the Traditional Lesson Plan

By Marie Doyle & Daniel T. Holm

Lesson planning is acknowledged to be critical to the success or failure of a teacher (Arnold, 1988; Roskos, 1996). First proposed by Ralph Tyler (1950), the traditional planning model consists of a sequence of four steps: (a) specify objectives; (b) select learning activities; c) organize learning activities; and (d) identify evaluation procedures. This traditional model for planning has been recommended for use at all levels of curriculum planning (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

In the 1970s and the 1980s, educational researchers began to examine the processes experienced teachers use in planning and how these processes compare to the recommended Tylerian view of instructional planning. "The literature is in reasonable agreement that a narrowly construed version of the linear 'rational planning model' does not describe the planning behavior of experienced teachers" (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 268). In contrast to the traditional lesson planning model, experienced teachers plan in more circular and learner-centered ways.

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When planning, experienced teachers often begin with a general idea for a learning activity. They do not focus on lesson objectives as they begin to

plan. They visualize how a lesson might proceed in the classroom. Through this visualization process, experienced teachers extend their planning by elaborating on initial ideas and modifying their plans. The visualization of the teaching episode is centered on the learners and the specific context of the classroom (Yinger & Clark, 1982, 1983). Several other studies support Robert J. Yinger and Christopher M. Clark's descriptions of teacher planning as an interactive, rather than a linear process (see *e.g.*, Sardo, 1982; Taylor, 1970; Zahorik, 1975). Clark and Penelope L. Peterson (1986) report that teachers do consider learning outcomes as they plan, but often the focus is on constructing the learning activity, thinking about outcomes, modifying instructional activities, reconsidering outcomes, and developing a final plan. This design process seems to vary depending on individual teacher's intentions for learning, and conceptions of the teaching and learning process.

Hilda Borko and Carol Livingston (1989) compared expert teachers and student teachers' planning processes. Both experts and novices developed mental plans and details for their teaching episodes. However, the processes used by the novices and experts differed. Students using the traditional lesson plan did not anticipate learners' reactions and responses to their lessons and were not able to make adjustments when needed in their efforts to stick to the plan. The experienced teachers, in contrast, kept a more general vision of their plans in their heads and were able to make needed adjustments as they taught in response to learners' reactions during the teaching episode.

As a matter of tradition, linear, scripted lesson plans are introduced in the preservice teacher education program (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Kauchak & Eggen, 1989; Roskos, 1996). While research on teacher thinking and planning over the last 20 years suggests that experienced teachers plan in cyclical and learner-centered ways, the traditional planning model is still the most common form of planning taught in preservice teacher education programs across the country (Cochran-Smith, 1995). While the mismatch between what preservice teachers learn and what experienced teacher do is troubling, even more disturbing is the view of teaching that the traditional lesson plan perpetuates. Many teacher education programs have adopted a constructivist view of teaching and learning (McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996). Constructivists approach teaching with the belief that knowledge is "created through the learner's interaction with a social and physical environment whereby the learner interprets the stimuli in light of his or her previous knowledge (prior experiences) and modifies current ideas that appear consistent or inadequate for dealing with the new situation" (McNeil, 1995, p. 11). While embracing the constructivist view of teaching, teacher education programs cling to the traditional model of planning which encourages a very different view of teaching and learning.

> Taken as artifacts of the culture of teaching and teacher education, typical lesson plan assignments imply that both planning for teaching and teaching itself are linear activities that proceed from a preplanned opening move to a known and predetermined endpoint. They suggest that knowledge, curriculum, and instruc-

> tion are static and unchanging, transmitted through a one-way conduit from teacher to students, rather than socially constructed through the transactions of teachers, children, and texts. This perspective assumes that we can accurately predict how children make sense of ideas, texts, and information, and that all children understand and connect these to their own prior knowledge and experience in the same ways. Most important, writing and conducting lessons of the sort described here endorse and perpetuate the primacy of mastery, scripture, and method. (Cochran-Smith, 1995, p. 496)

Dona M. Kagan and Deborah J. Tippins (1992) suggest we need to rethink the traditional lesson plan. Stories or narrative lesson plans may provide a means to help preservice teachers become more learner-centered in their thinking. Stories provide an opportunity to interpret and reinterpret events (Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). There is a growing body of literature that suggests stories provide inservice teachers a means to make sense of teaching and learning contexts (Carter, 1993; Clandinin, 1993; Maas, 1991). Stories, however, have not been used with preservice teachers in their planning tasks. If one of the goals of teacher preparation is to help beginning teachers examine their own teaching, then story may be a way to meet that goal. Story may also help preservice teachers learn to plan in a more open-ended, cyclical manner that reflects more closely what experienced teachers do. The cyclic nature of stories is exemplified by David Metzger (1979), who writes:

> Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside of stories and stories between stories and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is the getting lost. If you're lost, you really start to look around and listen. (p. 104)

In light of the growing body of literature which suggests that stories provide inservice teachers an opportunity to make sense of teaching and learning contexts (Carter, 1993; Clandinin, 1993; Mass, 1991), we wanted to know if stories could help preservice teachers focus on learners as they planned for teaching. We also wanted to know if stories could help preservice teachers focus on learners as they retold and reflected on their teaching experiences.

The purpose of this paper is to describe how a story lesson plan was used to help preservice teachers plan and reflect on their teaching. We will share the story lesson plan format and provide examples and analysis of preservice teachers' stories. Conclusions about the use of this alternative plan will be discussed.

Background of the Study

The context of this study is the second year of an university/public school partnership program between the elementary education faculty at Indiana University South Bend and teachers at six schools within the South Bend Community School Corporation. Within this newly structured elementary education program,

students participate in field placement classes under the direct mentoring of experienced classroom teachers and university faculty. The preservice teachers are enrolled in "blocked" advanced elementary education methods courses and work two half days a week in an elementary school classroom. In some instances, the preservice teachers work in pairs in their field placement. The preservice teachers aid the classroom teacher, work with small groups of students, and provide one-to-one tutoring as needed in the classroom. They are required to formally plan, teach, and reflect on at least four lessons during the field experience. The students keep a weekly field experience journal and they are required to submit a formal lesson plan and a written lesson analysis for each lesson they teach in the field.

During the first year of the partnership program, we collected the preservice teachers' journals, lesson plans, and lesson analyses. We analyzed these data to see what the preservice teachers found problematic as they were learning to teach. There was a strong focus on learners in the preservice teachers' weekly journal writings. They wrote about the children they were working with and reflected on how they might help these children learn. This focus on learners, however, was noticeably missing in the written lesson plans and lesson analyses. The data from the lessons and lesson analyses were almost entirely focused on the technical aspects of teaching, such as timing of lessons, teaching strategies, and teaching materials. This led us to consider how we could help the preservice teachers focus more on the learners as they planned and reflected on their teaching.

We reframed the traditional lesson plan as a story hoping that stories would provide a means for our preservice teachers to interpret and reinterpret teaching events. We also hoped that in using a story format to plan and reflect on teaching, students would create an image of instructional activities with children as the center of the "action."

We broke the methodological model for teaching the story lesson plan into three steps. Step I consisted of instruction on writing a lesson plan containing the elements of setting, characters, and plot. The setting was explained as description of the "where" of the story. For example, does the story take place in the classroom, in the library, in the hall? The characterization focused on the descriptions of "who" in the story. Who are the students? Who will engage in the lesson? Who will answer questions? Who will teach the lesson? The last element is the plot, which is the "what" of the lesson. What is being taught, what are the learning expectations, and what will happen at the end of the story? As the reader is no doubt aware, all of these elements are imagined as the preservice teacher writes the story. The preservice teacher, in essence, predicts what will happen prior to teaching the lesson.

Step II is the actual teaching of the lesson. During this step, the student uses the predictive story as a framework for the who, what, and where of instruction. After teaching the lesson, the preservice teacher returns to rewrite the story as Step III.

During Step III, the preservice teacher describes what actually happened. It is this second story that becomes a description of the instructional sequence.

Methods and Procedures

The preservice teachers who participated in the study were first semester seniors in a Social Studies Methods class who planned to student teach in the subsequent semester. One of the authors taught the methods course. During the first semester of the study, there were 27 students in two sections of this course. The students were given the option of using the story format for at least one of their four required field experience lessons. Twenty students chose to try using the story lesson plan. Eighteen students used this format for one of their lessons, one student used the story format for two lessons, and one student used the story format for all four required lessons. The students wrote a total of 24 lessons using the story format. During the second semester of the study, there were 35 students in two sections of the social studies course. All students were required to use the story lesson plan for at least one of their required field experience lessons. In year two of the study, all students in the methods class wrote at least one lesson plan using the story format. A total of 127 stories were written and analyzed. The students analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of using the story lesson plan in their field experience journals at the end of each semester.

All the preservice teachers' stories were copied for analysis. The primary purpose of the analysis was to make sense out of the story data and to look for patterns among the data that would help us understand how storying impacted our students' thinking. The focus of the analysis was on how the story lesson plans differed from the traditional lesson plans. The stories were read and reread. Using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), major themes in the stories that appeared to be similar or dissimilar were noted. When a theme was identified, all pieces of the data that appeared to fit this theme were compared. If on further comparison, some data did not seem to fit the dimensions of the theme, a new theme was identified. A colleague reviewed and commented on the themes and findings as they emerged from the analysis process. This process continued until all the data were exhausted. The journal responses describing the advantages and disadvantages of using the story lesson plan were analyzed using this same method of analysis. Examples of the students' stories are presented below. Results from the data analysis are presented and defined through illustrations from the data. Pseudonyms are used for all references to preservice teachers, classroom teachers, and children.

Results and Discussion

Story Data

Three themes emerged from the analysis of the story data. Two themes emerged from the pre-teaching stories: a focus on learners and preservice teachers' feelings. One theme emerged from the post-teaching stories: a focus on learners.

Pre-Teaching: Focus on Learners

There were descriptions of anticipated student interactions and reactions to the "story" not commonly found in the traditional lesson plan. These descriptions detailed the student behaviors the authors hoped to see during the teaching episode.

> His lesson begins by asking the students what they know about the early explorers and why some of them were afraid to travel the oceans. He hopes to have a student bring up the idea that many people of those times thought that the earth was flat.

Some authors even anticipated or planned ahead of time who they might call on to keep the story moving.

> The class finishes their assignment soon. I walk to the front of the class and ask the students for their attention. The class quickly comes to order, and I tell them that today we are going to be discussing zoo animals. First, I ask them what a zoo is. At least ten hands go up. I call on one girl from the center of the room. She has a brief, but correct response. Then I go on to explain the history of zoos.

One of the authors had been struggling with helping children work effectively in groups. In a previous lesson, the preservice teacher had divided his second graders into groups that included children with various abilities and interests. This lesson had not gone well because the children could not get along with each other in the groups. At the suggestion of one of the methods instructors, the preservice teacher decided to keep the same groups for his next lesson, but he would talk to the children about how he expected them to behave in their groups. He used the story lesson plan to prepare for teaching.

> But first I want to talk about a couple of things related to last week's group work. I begin to discuss the concepts of "respect" and my expectations for proper group cooperation. Sandy interrupts by asking, "Why can't we just choose our own group?" I explain to her that I expect them to be able to work together with all their classmates in a positive manner.

The author continues his story and tries to anticipate just how well the groups will work this time. His story reflects his uncertainty about whether or not the groups will be productive and what he might do to keep things on track.

> As the students break up into their cooperative learning groups, the noise level naturally rises. I allow this for a short time, but soon gain their attention to get to work.... After spending 15-20 minutes in this cooperative learning session, I ask the children to give me their attention so that we may begin our larger class discussion.... I begin by asking Group I to report and Sandy takes the floor. As she informs the class of the newly chosen club name, there is some disapproval voiced by Andy and Tommy. I explain that everyone had a job to do and we must respect their decisions. Each group follows with their responses which I find to be fairly good.

The pre-teaching stories included several examples of planning ahead for

possible student disruptions or management challenges.

> Miss Milner notices that Larry and Jermal are sitting next to each other. She knows that is a dangerous combination so she asks Larry to move next to Kerry. He makes a face and reluctantly moves.

The story lesson plan seemed to help the preservice teachers anticipate learners' responses to their teaching. As with the traditional plans, the stories still described the events the authors were planning for the children, but were more focused on learners and how they would react to the teaching episode.

Pre-Teaching: Preservice Teachers' Feelings

A second theme emerged from the analysis of the pre-teaching story lesson plans. Several authors described their own feelings and thoughts about teaching the lesson in their stories. These anticipations would not normally be included in a traditional story plan.

> Soon the bell rings and Mrs. T. goes to fetch her charges, leaving us alone in the room to recap the plans for our lessons. As we make last-minute modifications and assure each other that all should go as planned, the cold, harsh wind blows relentlessly outside, sending a chill up our spines. This is the moment we have been planning for-our first lesson of the field experience.

Some authors expressed concern about how effective they would be with their children:

> The challenge for Sarah (the preservice teacher) was to see if she could keep their attention with an activity and a lesson and still maintain some class order. With a lot of planning and consideration, Sarah decided on her strategies.

Other authors seemed to be talking to themselves and encouraging themselves as they planned for the teaching episode.

> Of course I am excited and enter the room with a smile and a positive attitude because I know things are going to go smoothly and sensational. I repeat in my mind, "It is only 6th graders." I am secure and confident. This is good.

These descriptions of feelings and self-thought were not an anticipated outcome as we planned to use the story lesson plan. These findings suggest that the story lesson plan may give preservice teachers a way to personalize their planning and help them see that teaching is not a set of skills separate from who they are as people.

Post-Teaching: Focus on Learners

The most dominant theme that appeared in the post-teaching story analysis was the focus on learners. The authors described what the learners said, what the learners did, and how they tried to encourage learners to be successful during the teaching

episodes. This focus on learners was dramatically different from the focus on the mechanics of teaching we have seen when using a traditional post-lesson analysis format. Most of the post stories described how the learners reacted to the teaching and how the preservice teachers had to intervene so that the learners would experience success during the lesson.

> ...The third group Amy, Shana, Andy, and Charles, had a hard time beginning the activity, but we talked about where to start and we figured out three blocks to start with. Then they took over, they worked slowly, but they were checking each move they made with each other. The fourth group...did not get along. Terry wanted to do it all himself and in a hurry. Nothing was getting done so I asked them if they would take turns placing the blocks. They began to take turns and it worked, they began talking about what moves to make.

> After the instructions were given the game begins: (from the pre-teaching story). The students begin working in groups. I think they are doing a great job working together. Cory is the first to raise his hand. "I don't get it," he says. I explain to him again that he and his partner need to pick out the important details and write them on a card. He asked, "What details?" I point out to him that they are on the board, and he begins working.... The group of three, Nicky, Bobby, and Pat are almost done already. They ask me how many things they need to write, and I told them to find as many important details as they can. They go back to work.

Some authors described how the learners responded to their teaching. The authors seem to delight in the excitement and enthusiasm they observed in the learners.

> As Miss Hide reads to the class, the students search furiously through heir vocabulary flash cards we have allowed them to use for the correct word match. Someone shouts, "Ecosystems!" and everyone groans. "Don't worry, we'll play it a few more times," reassure Miss Hide as she gives the winner a prize.... We'll play until we hit one more Ecosystems," announces Miss Hide. The students all have looks of panic and distress on their faces. Under the noise of shuffling vocabulary cards, we can hear grumbling, unhappy with the fact that this will be the last one of the day.

Several authors reflected on individual learners as they retold their stories. They describe how the individual responded to the teaching episode. Their descriptions suggest that the preservice teachers were becoming good observers of children.

> Mrs. Henry has the children come to the front of the room and talk about what they drew. Kerry is very articulate with her oral language and is able to tell in a very clear way what exactly she did and why. Then it's Marcy's turn, she has just been sitting there with a blank stare on her face during the class, she has hardly anything done. Mrs. Henry tells her to go back to her seat and finish her drawing. Randy was asking question after question, he is a perfect candidate to try inquiry learning on. He wants answers immediately and needs to know that he is doing it right.

Journal Data

Several themes emerged from the analysis of the journal data we collected at the end of the semester. The preservice teachers identified a sense of freedom, the focus on learners, visualization, and better preparation as advantages of the story lesson plan. The only disadvantage identified in relation to the story lesson plan was the lack of objectives and evaluation plans.

Sense of Freedom

The authors reported having a sense of freedom when using the story lesson plan. They felt free to be creative when they did not have to think about all the "parts" of the traditional lesson plan. The authors seemed happy with the opportunity to "let go" and "be creative."

> I also didn't feel quite as structured and confined while writing my lesson plan as I usually do. I was able to "let go" and get involved with the characters of the story instead of always focusing on the technical side of my instruction.

> I liked the story and wish I would have done further "chapters." The story lesson is putting into words how I think about a lesson. I found in the past when I relied on a written out plan for my implementation, the lesson does not go smoothly. For me, it is like walking with crutches. I can go much more smoothly if I can lay the crutches aside and walk on my own.

Focus on Learners

The authors reported that the story lesson plan helped them to focus on the learners when planning their teaching episodes. These comments support the focus on learners that emerged as a theme as we analyzed the story data.

> The first (advantage) is it helped me think about the students in the class. I really looked at their behaviors on an individual basis. I feel many times we look at an activity or lesson and think about the class as a whole instead of the individuals in the class. Writing the story lesson took me longer to do, but it was easier because of the thought patterns. I could write about what I thought or saw and it was a continuous flow of ideas once I got started. When writing a lesson plan, it is step by step and the ideas don't flow from objective to sequence to assessment. Again, when writing the story, I felt I was thinking about the children in my sequence more than the form I was putting in it.

Several authors reported that the story lesson plan helped them see the children in a different way. It helped them remember that the children were "actual people."

> The story format was a good way to incorporate creativity into a lesson. Using this format kept reminding me that I was teaching actual characters (or students). The format forced me to describe that students and the setting which I would be teaching in. It was good practice because I was able to look at my students in a

different way. Using this format helped me to realize that I was working with actual people, it forced me to describe the plot and what would happen to the students.

I felt much more in touch with the students' emotions, feelings, and anxieties when creating this format. I looked at the students as humans who were going to experience various levels of emotions because of my teaching abilities. the students were going to be bonded to my teaching. I was the leader or creator of the story, and I wanted to make sure they enjoyed the story and learned something from it.

Several authors commented on how the story lesson plan helped them anticipate children's reactions prior to teaching. These comments support the focus on anticipating students' reactions that emerged as a theme as we analyzed the story data.

Using the story format made me think about the students in my class that I would be teaching, more than the traditional lesson plan did. I found myself thinking about and preparing for each individual child in the classroom. I thought about how each individual student would behave and respond during the lesson. I knew before going into the lesson who would more than likely try to cause trouble and I was more prepared to deal with it because I had thought about it. I also thought about which students would raise their hands even if they had no clue what the answer to my question was, and I thought about who would actually know the answers This made me prepare more on how to deal with students before situations arose that could be disastrous to my lesson.

Visualization for More Effective Planning

The authors reported that they were able to imagine and visualize more clearly how the lesson would flow using the story lesson planning format. The authors felt that the story lesson plan helped them to create a clear vision of the lesson prior to teaching.

Another thing I enjoyed about the story lesson plan was how it helped me to visualize how the lesson would actually go. I had to sit down and, thinking of it as a story, really take the whole process step by step, watching it unfold in my mind as I went. This was wonderful in helping me identify whole areas or specific things about my lesson that were just not going to work before I presented it in the classroom and watched it fall apart.

It forced me to look at teaching from an angle of someone watching the lesson and being able to make opinions of how the lesson went. The lesson plan forced me to look at the lesson through the eyes of someone else. I wonder what I would think of the lesson if I read the story. Would I like the story? Or would I feel that something was missing. .

Several authors also felt that the story lesson plan was more effective than the traditional plan in helping them prepare for teaching.

Finally, a third and very important advantage is that it described the lesson in more detail than the traditional one. This allows me to look at everything I did.

> First, I think it flows from one point to the next. Just like actually doing the lesson, the anticipatory set is not separate from the instruction as it is in the traditional plan. I also liked that the story lesson let me go through the steps in my head. Going through the story in my mind is more beneficial to me than writing every single step down like you do in the traditional lesson plan.
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> I simply didn't have to waste my time getting down all of the components of the Madeline Hunter style lesson plan. I am able to just sit down, think about what I want to do with the students, the outcomes I expect to get, and how I will, achieve them. I am able to organize my plan in the same manner that I actually think about it. This method just makes more sense.

Concern about Objectives and Assessment

The major theme that ran through the journal data related to disadvantages was the concern on the part of the authors that in using the story format, objectives for the lesson might be missed. Several authors were concerned about whether or not an assessment plan would be left out in the story.

> The only disadvantage I see in the story lesson plan is that it does not state specific objectives, goals, or ways of assessment. I did not have a problem with this because I considered each of these things before I wrote the story; however, these are things that would need to be specifically stated if this was a lesson to show someone in authority.

Goals and objectives had been stressed so much in the preparation program, that it was hard for the preservice teachers to realize that the outcomes of their lessons were embedded in the teaching and learning experience. They felt something seemed to be wrong when the plan didn't state specific goals and objectives.

> However, this lack of structure did, at times, allow me to "wander" from some important points that are essential in a good plan. For example, stating the objectives in a story form is much more difficult than simply stating them in the appropriate section the way one would on the traditional format.
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> One disadvantage to this type of plan is I think it might become easy for objectives to become lost. Therefore, assessment might not match the objectives.

Several students reported that they use the traditional lesson plan as a guide while teaching and found this difficult to do using the story plan.

> I like to keep my lesson plans in front of me while I teach and refer to them as necessary. I often check to make sure the lesson is still coinciding with my objectives, and hasn't taken a wrong turn somewhere. The traditional guidelines are very helpful to me as I am a structured person. I can readily see what I am looking for as I am assessing the lesson itself, the students, and myself.

This particular student was very analytical in her approach to teaching. She was very successful with children and received excellent evaluations from the class-

room teachers with whom she worked. In her journal, this student decided she would probably use the traditional plan to help keep her organized. She did, however, describe how using the story lesson plan made her realize some important things about teaching.

> While I was preparing for my lesson in my field experience and beginning to write out my plans as a story, I was forced to pause for a minute and stop and think about what I was doing. Although I had gathered several resources on communities, written out objectives, and prepared materials to be used in class, I suddenly realized something very important. I hadn't considered the different aspects of the group of students I was going to be working with. I made sure the level was going to be geared towards second graders, but didn't stop to consider each second grader affected by other individuals, as well as the plot. Storying is a good way to make sure teachers do take a moment to consider their students in preparation for each lesson. As I began to write out my story, much of what I originally planned quickly changed as I thought about the characters in the classroom.... In addition to this, storying helps you anticipate those unexpected, and yes, even, those unwelcome situations. Through storying I was beginning to visualize different things that could possibly happen and ask myself questions. What if I explained things very clearly, yet the students still didn't understand what I wanted? How could I reach those kids that didn't want to be reached? How would I react if my lesson fell apart or didn't work? What if a fight broke out in my classroom?...It is this type of thinking that is a real advantage to a classroom teacher. While not everything can be "pretested," it can be "presupposed." As I was mentally visualizing different situations that could happen and asking myself questions, I again realized how important it is for me to remain flexible as I begin my student teaching and my teaching career. Sometimes even unforeseen circumstances arise that cannot be controlled You learn to modify, adapt, and continue on.

Conclusion

Planning is a critical aspect of teachers' work. Helping preservice teachers learn to plan well is an important consideration in teacher education. In this study, we examined how the use of story impacted preservice teachers' planning and thinking about teaching and learning. Our research purpose was to investigate ways to help our students broaden their understanding of the planning process and to extend their cognitive and pedagogical schemas while planning. The small sample of preservice teachers using the story lesson plan reported here requires our conclusions to be tentative and speculative in nature. It does appear that the narrative approach to planning and reflecting on teaching may be an effective tool in helping preservice teachers extend their thinking beyond the technical aspects of teaching and help them focus more on learners as they plan instruction.

The results of this study indicate that the story lesson plan helped the preservice teachers predict children's reactions and responses to instruction. The authors used what they knew about the children they were working with to anticipate how their

instruction might impact the learners. Unlike the traditional lesson planning model, the narrative plan seemed to help our students begin to understand that children make sense of ideas and information in many different ways. The preservice teachers indicated this type of planning made them reconsider their instructional strategies. The story lesson plan made them feel better prepared for teaching, and gave them a sense of freedom to create a vision of teaching that focused on children and their learning.

In retelling their stories after teaching, the preservice teachers described how the lived story unfolded with the children as the most important element of the experience. Through this retelling, the preservice teachers focused on the social aspects of the teaching process. They described how learning took place through the transactions and interactions that occurred between themselves and the children. These findings suggest that the story lesson plan may help preservice teachers understand that teaching is not a one-way transmission from teacher to student, but an ever-changing process of negotiated understandings.

As we read and responded to the students' stories, we wondered if the story lesson plan was helping the students expand their thinking, or if the thinking was already there and the story lesson plan was just a way to access this thinking. The findings from the data that asked students to describe the advantages of the story lesson plan indicate that this narrative approach to planning did indeed help our students to think about teaching and planning in new and expanded ways. The story lesson plan helped students put learners at the center of their planning. The responses from the students about the advantages of this approach to planning suggests the traditional lesson plan does not encourage preservice teachers to consider many important aspects of teaching and learning.

Just as one type of learning tool or experience will not work for every learner in the classroom, not every preservice teacher will find the story lesson plan equally helpful. Some students found it difficult to teach without the outline the traditional lesson plan provides. They indicated they needed something to refer to as they taught their lessons. These students, however, still found value in the process of using story to plan for instruction. They learned many important things about teaching and learning as they used the story lesson plan.

The preservice teachers described their feelings, concerns, and fears as they created their pre-teaching story lesson plans. Unlike the traditional lesson plan, story gave them an opportunity to express themselves in a personal way as they planned for teaching. D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly (1995) suggest that who we are as people greatly impacts who we are as teachers. Personal knowledge and processional knowledge create the landscapes upon which teachers create their lived stories. Too often in teacher education we push our students to view teaching as a set of technical, expert skills, separate from who they are as people, from the children with whom they work, and from the contexts within which they work (Henderson, 1996). The results of this study suggest that the story lesson

plan may be a way to help preservice teachers expand their thinking beyond the technical aspects of teaching and to consider learners, contexts, and their own role as people as they plan, teach, and reflect on their experiences as beginning teachers

Clark and Peterson (1986) point out that training preservice teachers in use of a version of the traditional planning model provides them with an "appropriate foundation for developing a planning style compatible with their own personal characteristics and with the task environments in which they must teach" (p. 268). How to help preservice teachers move beyond the technical foundations of planning to more complex processes required for effective teaching remains an obscure and incomplete topic in teacher education research and practice. The limited use of a constructivist perspective in past studies on teacher planning makes this topic even more challenging for teacher education. In light of educational reforms that call for teachers who can provide well-planned, interactive, and learner-centered instruction, more research is needed in the area of preservice teacher planning with the goal of preparing skillful teachers for new visions of teaching and learning (Roskos, 1996).

We continue to use the story lesson plan as a tool for helping our preservice teacher plan and reflect on teaching. This strategy continues to evolve as we have more experiences with this approach to planning. More questions arise as we seek to enhance our students' thinking during planning. For example, what role should the traditional lesson plan continue to have in learning to teach? What might happen if the traditional lesson plan and the story lesson plan were used together? Which should come first? Can story help preservice teachers plan longer units of instruction beyond the individual lesson. What other strategies can we use to expand preservice teachers' thinking while planning?

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California Council on the Education of Teachers

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For information or membership in the California Council on the Education of Teachers, please contact after July 1, 1998: Alan H. Jones, Executive Secretary, California Council on the Education of Teachers, Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard, Suite 275, San Francisco, California 94118, telephone 415/392-1911, fax 415/392-8748. e-mail caddogap@aol.com

The next semi-annual conference of the California Council on the Education of Teachers will be:

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