



## Collaboration as School Reform: Are There Patterns in the Chaos of Planning with Teachers?

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### Abstract

*Emphasis on collaboration is a significant thrust in both current school reform and school librarianship. Planning for instruction is generally included in various definitions and models of collaboration. Some research exists about individual planning done in isolation (Warren 2000), but little is known about teachers' planning with other professionals. While school librarianship has been concerned with collaboration, we also have very little about the actual work of planning (Wolcott 1994). What does planning sound like? Would it sound chaotic to novices and other outsiders? To begin to develop a more robust model of what collaboration entails, this paper describes the patterns found in the planning meetings of a team of second-grade teachers and a school librarian. Transcripts from the team's eight planning meetings across a school year were analyzed for patterns. The analysis identified these five activities: orienting, coordinating, drifting, making sense, and making connections. The findings of this study were significant for several reasons: (1) they provide a description of an actual year of planning between a school librarian and a team of teachers, (2) patterns were uncovered in the activities of planning, (3) these activities bear strong resemblance to many models of problem solving and instructional design, and (4) the role of the school librarian was particularly strong in the activity of making connections. While this study confirmed Wolcott's (1994) suggestion that planning is not a linear process, the study did uncover persistent patterns in the types of activities that made up planning.*

*One year, as the school librarian at Obama Elementary School, I had a student intern who was completing hours for her school library practicum. Eager to have her understand collaboration, I invited her to join a planning meeting with the first-grade team. Obama Elementary School had a flexible schedule, and as the school librarian, I met regularly for an entire afternoon, at least once a month, to plan with teachers of each grade level. These meetings were held in the school library while assistants covered the teachers' classes. This particular meeting was very productive with library books and lesson ideas tossed around, and included the scheduling of several lessons in the school library. The next day I asked the intern what she thought about the meeting, and she responded that it seemed really "chaotic."*

*The intern's reaction to what I had considered a good example of collaboration led to this study about planning by the school librarian together with teachers. Emphasis on collaboration is a significant thrust in both current school reform (Cochran-Smith and Lyttle 1999; Dufour and Eaker 1998; Fullan 2001; Hord 2004; Kane and Henning 2004; Schmoker 2004) and in school librarianship (AASL 2009; Bacon 2008; Branch 2005; Brown 2004; Buzzeo 2002; Bush 2003; Doll 2005), and planning for instruction is generally included in various definitions and models of collaboration (Grover 1996; Loertscher 2000; Montiel-Overall 2005). Some research exists about individual planning done in isolation (Warren 2000), but little is known about teachers' planning with other professionals. While school librarianship has been concerned with collaboration, we also have very little research about the actual work of planning (Wolcott 1994). What does planning sound like? Would it sound chaotic to novices and other outsiders? The purpose of this study is to describe the patterns found in the planning meetings of a team of teachers and a school librarian; the study is intended to begin the development of a more robust model of what collaboration entails. Such a model would enable school librarians to better articulate the work of planning and collaboration to new and pre-service school librarians, to the teachers we aspire to work with, and to the administrators whose support is needed for collaboration (Morris and Packard 2007). This research question guided the study: What kinds of activities characterize the talk of planning between a team of teachers and a school librarian?*

## Frameworks

### Collaboration as School Reform

Tracing a century of school reform, Tyack and Cuban chronicle the efforts of policy makers to reform schools, concluding that the “persistent grammar of schooling” results in the maintenance of established classroom practices and difficulty on the part of many educators to accept and implement reform. Instead, they suggest, “Reforms should be designed to be hybridized, adapted by educators working together to take advantage of their knowledge of their own diverse students and communities and supporting each other in new ways of teaching” (1995, 135–36). This sort of collaboration has been hailed elsewhere as “our most effective tool for improving instruction” (Schmoker 2004, 431). Increasingly, the call is for teachers to move out of their isolation, to make their knowledge explicit, and to engage in collaborative inquiry about practice (Cochran-Smith and Lyttle 1999; Dufour and Eaker 1998; Fullan 2001; Hord 2004).

### Collaboration in School Librarianship

The school-library literature has been replete with calls for collaboration. A few frameworks have been developed, most notably Grover (1996) and Montiel-Overall (2005). Grover distinguished collaboration from cooperation and coordination; cooperation and coordination involve some planning but little interdependence. Montiel-Overall (2005) drew on Loertscher's (2000) taxonomy for librarians working with teachers. Montiel-Overall collapsed Loertscher's ten levels into four: coordination, cooperation, integrated instruction, and integrated curriculum. While Grover and Montiel-Overall have similar constructs for coordination and cooperation, Montiel-Overall significantly considers each level as a form of “collaborative effort.” Montiel-Overall's level of integrated instruction as that “jointly planned, implemented and evaluated” (2005) is most commonly recognized as a definition of collaboration. In Brown's interview and focus-group study of successful teacher-librarian collaboration, she found that one of the important environmental factors was regularly scheduled planning meetings (2004). Given

planning's importance to the collaboration process and the fact that planning could be considered evidence of collaboration, it's surprising how little in the school-library literature has been written about planning.

### Teacher Planning

In a review of the literature Warren (2000) found these influences on teacher planning: experience, schedules, availability of resources, and the interests and needs of students. One of the studies on which Warren reported, McCutcheon (1981), involved an in-depth study of twelve elementary school teachers, looking at how they planned, what they wrote down, and what they implemented. While this research found that teachers' written plans were like shopping lists with items checked off as they were completed, McCutcheon also found that teachers' richest lesson planning was mental and implicit, involving detailed mental rehearsals drawing on past repertoires of lessons. In a study where university researchers attempted to collaborate with teachers, Carlone and Webb (2006) found that teachers seemed to have a "storyline" for planning that included a "to-do" check-off list; the teachers resisted the researchers' attempts to negotiate meanings of subject matter or curriculum objectives. Bisplinghoff suggested as well that "Traditionally, planning has been a topic that we teachers tend to step over, taking for granted that those same-sized little boxes in the teacher planning books can adequately contain us all" (2002, 121). In a study of new teachers in Canada, Prytula, Hellsten, and McIntyre (2010) found that new teachers viewed time during the school day to plan collaboratively with other teachers of lower value than individual preparation time. While these studies confirmed the isolation and individuality of teachers' planning, Prytula, Hellsten, and McIntyre suggested the need for a new epistemological paradigm in teacher education more in line with the current shift toward knowledge creation and away from a knowledge-transmission view of education (2010).

### Teacher Planning in School-Library Literature

Certainly, school librarians would be expected to embrace this epistemological shift reflected in the emphasis on knowledge creation and sharing found in the *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* (AASL 2007) and through the roles of the school librarian outlined in *Empowering Learners* (AASL 2009): leader, instructional partner, teacher, program administrator, and information specialist.

In her 1994 article about teacher planning, Wolcott focused on the school librarian's role of instructional consultant, which was identified in *Information Power* (AASL and AECT 1988); Wolcott suggested that the failure to achieve this role was, in part, a lack of understanding about how teachers plan. Surveying the research, she found that teachers plan for a variety of reasons, have different styles of planning, and that their planning was nonlinear, more mental than written, and influenced by published curriculum materials. Given these findings, she suggested that school librarians "set aside linear planning models," accommodate teachers' styles of planning, and leverage the role of school librarian as provider of resources.

In 2001 Callison addressed collaborative planning of lessons; he provided a fourteen-point model—including objectives, context, time frame, gathering or packaging resources, evaluation, and celebration—suggesting that not all elements need to be included in every plan and not necessarily in any prescribed order. Both Wolcott and Callison seemed to suggest that unit planning is the level of planning best suited to a team approach.

Franklin and Stevens (2008) noted the importance of written lesson plans when collaborating with teachers; these authors also noted the importance of knowledge of content and information-literacy standards, along with knowledge of resources and adaptations for different learners.

While we, as school librarians, continue to focus on collaboration with teachers as a worthy goal and we recognize that time set aside for planning is an important component of collaboration, we have largely failed to define what that planning might look and sound like to participants, and have paid little attention to what planning means to teachers. This study is one attempt to address that gap. Given that the work of planning and collaboration involves talk, a study of the discourse, or talk of planning was chosen as the method.

Gee and Green (1998) wrote about the study of discourse as a study of social practices. In particular they developed a heuristic to think about talk as accomplishing four building activities: identity building, activity building, connection building, and world building. This heuristic was particularly important in my analysis of kinds of activities found in the planning meetings.

## Methods

### Setting and Participants

The principal researcher for this study was the school librarian at the school, Obama Elementary, and thus served in a dual participant/observer role as both researcher and the school librarian (pseudonyms have been used for the school and all participants except the school librarian/principal researcher). This study was part of a larger discourse analysis and ethnographic study of a year of planning between a school librarian and a team of three second-grade teachers (Kimmel 2010, 2011, 2012). Obama was a small (fewer than three hundred students) urban school that had a flexible schedule and collaborative planning in place since it had opened five years previous to the study. Over 90 percent of the students at Obama Elementary were African American, and qualified for free or reduced lunch. Of the three teachers on the second-grade team only Dianna had returned to second grade from the previous year. Areyanna had “looped” with her first-grade class to second grade. Both she and Dianna had sixteen years’ experience teaching. Dianna had always been in second grade. Brittany was a first-year teacher. The curriculum coordinator attended six meetings and the classroom assistant attended two. The principal, Sally Hall,,stopped by on one occasion, but never attended these meetings.

### Data-Collection Procedures and Data Sources

Block grade-level planning meetings with second-grade teachers and the school librarian were held once monthly in September through April. Each of these meetings was digitally recorded using an iPod equipped with a microphone. In total, eight meetings were held, and each meeting lasted an average of one hour and 53 minutes, resulting in a total of 13.7 hours of recordings. Each meeting was transcribed in its entirety, resulting in 269 pages of transcripts. These recordings and their transcripts served as the primary data source. During these meetings the researcher kept field notes. Prior to each meeting, any e-mail correspondence related to the meeting was retained. Also, any artifacts, such as printed curriculum or resource lists developed by the researcher in anticipation of the meeting, were collected. Artifacts that resulted from the meeting, such as further resource lists, minutes, follow-up emails, schedules and lesson plans, were also collected and retained. Following each meeting the researcher wrote additional field

notes and analytic memos. Field notes included other interactions between the school librarian and the teachers on the second-grade team; these interactions included informal planning, hallway conversations, and e-mails. Following the ethnographic perspective, each participating teacher was interviewed approximately midway through the school year, at the end of the year, and a year later as a final member check. These interviews were also digitally recorded and transcribed.

### **Data Analysis**

Following the suggestions of Sarroub, who recommends developing a timeline to “note transitions between various phases of the activity/talk (speech events) and the transitions between them” (2004, 113), one of the first stages in the analysis was to break the transcripts into five-minute segments and examine each segment for shifts or changes in topics. With as many as five participants at a meeting, this examination presented several problems. In five minutes it was not unusual for the topic to shift five or more times—often back to a primary topic or toggling between two topics.

The attempted timeline soon was as lengthy and unwieldy as the original transcript, and the one-directional timeline failed to capture overlapping topics or speakers, or multiple simultaneous conversations. Considering all the possible permutations among five speakers, the potential for complexity was seemingly exponential. The focus on shifts in conversation became too microscopic for this analysis.

### **Codes and Domain Analysis**

When trying to answer the general ethnographic question, “What is going on here?”, Spradley noted that, while a researcher may make endless descriptive observations, it is necessary to also work to uncover the cultural patterns in a social situation and to cycle through analyzing and collecting data (1980, 85). Thinking of Gee and Green’s (1998) four building tasks (identity, world, activity, connection), the next phase of analysis involved naming segments of the planning talk according to what was being accomplished by each, and these names became preliminary codes. For example, the month of January looked like this:

Orienting, Troubleshooting, Informing, Reporting, Asking for materials, Grouping students, Setting goals, Talking about assessments, Joking, Teacher observations about students, Using humor, Making connections school-wide, Talk about student behavior, problem identification, and problem solving, Sharing tutor, Sharing assistant, Understanding county mandates, Mentoring, Scheduling Librarian, Coordinating schedules, Tabling a topic, Plan social studies, Directing assistant, Eating chocolate, Informing about materials, Describing a resource, Sharing lesson ideas, Building lesson plan, Showing books, Intercom interruptions, Using textbook, Reading aloud, Discussing concepts, Talking about what was done in previous grade, Teacher observations about teaching methods, Describing past lesson, Scheduling library lesson, Coordinating library lesson with classroom instruction, Scheduling computer lab, Talking about student understanding.

Employing a constant comparison (Creswell 2005, 406), incidents in the transcripts were compared to established codes, and codes were compared to codes. As a result of these comparisons, the codes were developed and refined with each subsequent data source. The following categories emerged from the codes in almost every meeting: planning social studies or

science units, scheduling, discussing sharing students for guided reading or spelling, talking about students, hearing announcements from the curriculum facilitator, housekeeping tasks (e.g., needing a calendar or pencil or a form to complete), and making personal remarks. Inspiration 7.6 mapping software was then used to group the activities semantically and create cover terms in a domain analysis (Spradley 1980). Cover terms were developed both from the data and by Gee and Green's (1998) building heuristic.

Originally, these eight terms were identified: "agenda setting," "making connections," "resource sharing," "planning," "scheduling," "making sense," "students," and "off-topic." Subsequently, "resource sharing" became a part of "making connections" because resource sharing involved connecting a resource with curriculum. "Scheduling" broadened to become "coordinating," which included following pacing guides and using schedules to coordinate sharing students or resources. Agenda-setting, as well as places in the talk where decisions were requested or summarized, or participants checked in with each other for understanding, was named "orienting." In contrast to "orienting," talk that was at first labeled "off-topic" was recognized to imply movement and the possibility of discovery, and was renamed "drifting." Talk about students was generally of two types: making sense of student understanding and drifting away from the agenda to talk about student behavior, and so the category of "students" was divided and collapsed into "drifting" and "making sense."

The activity labeled "planning" was problematic because *everything* could be considered part of planning, and therefore, "planning" was renamed "creating" because, in these places, participants were creating a lesson or instructional activity together. But "creating" was found to be a chain consisting of the activities "making sense," "making connections," "orienting," and "coordinating." Therefore, "creating" was folded into "coordinating." The original eight terms were thus combined and refined into these five activities: orienting, coordinating, drifting, making sense, and making connections.

## Findings

### Overview of the Planning Meetings

The eight planning meetings were held approximately once a month during the 2008–2009 school year; the exception was the February meeting, which was postponed when several participants were ill and then was preempted by a winter storm that closed school for students, though Areyanna and I met to plan. During the meetings, science and social studies units generally alternated, accompanied by planning to integrate language arts and, occasionally, math. With the exception of the March 3 meeting, all teachers and I were present at each meeting. The curriculum facilitator was present for at least part of six meetings and the grade-level assistant was present at two of the meetings.

While all meetings shared common elements, the differences are worthy of note and understanding because they underscore the complexity and reality of teacher planning. One "pattern" in planning was motion. Each meeting was unique not only because of who was present and what curriculum unit was planned, but also because participants arrived late or left early, and because other critical issues often consumed planning time. An acknowledged purpose of these meetings attended by the school librarian was to plan and schedule lessons in the library. **Table 1** provides an overview of each month; this overview captures the units, library lessons,

and critical issues discussed, as well as information about who was present and how long the recording lasted for each meeting.

**Table 1. Overview of the Eight Planning Meetings**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Curriculum Units</b>	<b>Who Was Present CF=Curriculum Facilitator Sue=librarian and researcher</b>	<b>Critical Issues</b>	<b>Library Lessons Scheduled</b>
<b>September</b>	2 hr. 44 min.	Weather	Three teachers, Sue, CF (first part of meeting)	Guided reading groups	Windsock; author of the month
<b>October</b>	48 min. (iPod memory full)	Government and elections	Three teachers, Sue, CF		How do dinosaurs vote?; African American authors
<b>November</b>	2 hr. 2 min.	Sound, holidays	Three teachers, Sue, CF (first half of meeting)	Adoption of new program: Foundations	Holiday rotation, onomatopoeia
<b>December</b>	1 hr. 14 min.	Sound	Three teachers, Sue		Sound that jazz makes; MLK program
<b>January</b>	1 hr. 51 min.	Maps	Three teachers (but 2 leave early), Sue, assistant	Literacy groups based on new assessments	Landforms; Google Maps; letter to Obamas
<b>February (held on March 3)</b>	1 hr. 56 min.	States of matter	Sue and Areyanna (snow day); CF drops in at end		Popcorn; ice cream; paper
<b>March</b>	1 hr. 14 min.	Last 9 weeks' plans; past and present; baseball	Three teachers, Sue, assistant, CF	Foundations and summer school; author visit;	School-wide Poetry Day and author visit
<b>April</b>	1 hr. 52 min.	Natural resources; economics; money; animal life cycles	Three teachers, Sue, CF (leaves after 16 min.)		Endangered animals

While these meetings addressed distinct topics and dealt with a variety of critical issues throughout the school year, a goal of the analysis was to identify patterns in the kinds of activities that comprised each meeting. The analysis identified these five activities: orienting, coordinating, drifting, making sense, and making connections, which are summarized with examples in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Kinds of Activities that Comprised Planning Studied**

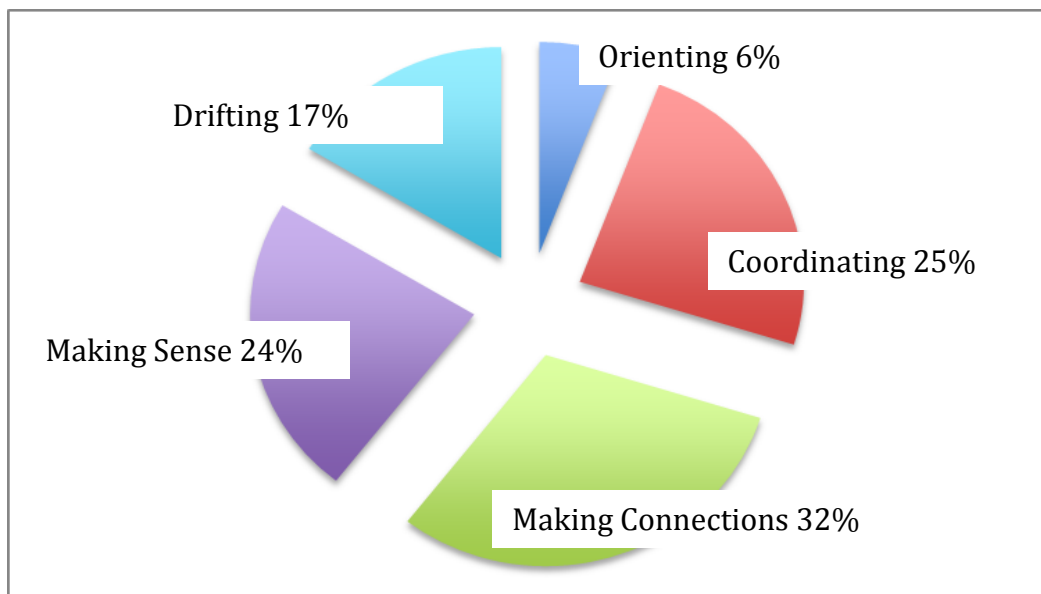
Activity	Description	Examples
<b>Orienting</b>	Setting agendas, making decisions, checking in, getting back to topic	<p>“So, we’re stopping here?” (Brittany, Sept.)</p> <p>“Can I jump in?” (Jean, Nov.)</p> <p>“Okay, girls.” (Dianna, Jan.)</p> <p>“Where do we want to start?” (Sue, Feb.)</p> <p>“We’re done with social studies. Do you want to do science?” (Sue, Apr.)</p>
<b>Coordinating</b>	Aligning schedules to share resources, students, or activities	<p>“Are you following the pacing guide?” (Jean, Sept.)</p> <p>“Finish lesson two tomorrow and do lesson three on Monday and lesson four on Tuesday.” (Areyanna, Sept.)</p> <p>“How many days in November – 30 or 31?” (Brittany, Oct.)</p> <p>“You know how it is with books, because we all do it at the same time.” (Brittany, Jan.)</p> <p>“Can you do it after lunch so that’s about twelve-thirty when you get here?” (Sue, Feb.)</p>
<b>Making connections</b>	Connecting curriculum to resources, other curricula, or past experiences	<p>“Your math goals fit perfectly with your weather goals.” (Sue, Sept.)</p> <p>“But you know we could definitely get a school board member to come to talk to your classes.” (Sue, Oct.)</p> <p>“Do we have a book to go with that?” (Areyanna, Feb.)</p> <p>“I have this little transparency of who provides goods, who provides services, from our old social studies unit or book.” (Dianna, Apr.)</p>
<b>Making Sense</b>	Understanding curriculum, teaching, resources, or student learning	<p>“Alright, are we doing anything with the anemometer or are they just looking at it in the book?” (Areyanna, Sept.)</p> <p>“Now do you have some kind of sheet that they are going to have while they do their listening walk, or are they just going to listen, and come back and write something down?” (Brittany, Nov.)</p>



		<p>“This may make more sense to them after we make the model.” (Areyanna, Dec.)</p> <p>“What are we doing with this book?” (Areyanna, Jan.)</p> <p>“Is it like moving for a job? What is it? What are they trying to get at?” (Sue, Apr.)</p>
<b>Drifting</b>	Any “other” talk that led away from the planning agenda	<p>“I get really depressed in January.” (Dianna, Dec.).</p> <p>“I’m trying to do Malcolm’s eyes. Get him into resource or something.” (Areyanna, Jan.)</p> <p>“Yes, Lord Jesus help you because they need a break from me and I need a break from them!” (Dianna, Jan.)</p> <p>“The blue kisses have coconut in them, and the eggs are just chocolate.” (Sue, Mar.)</p>

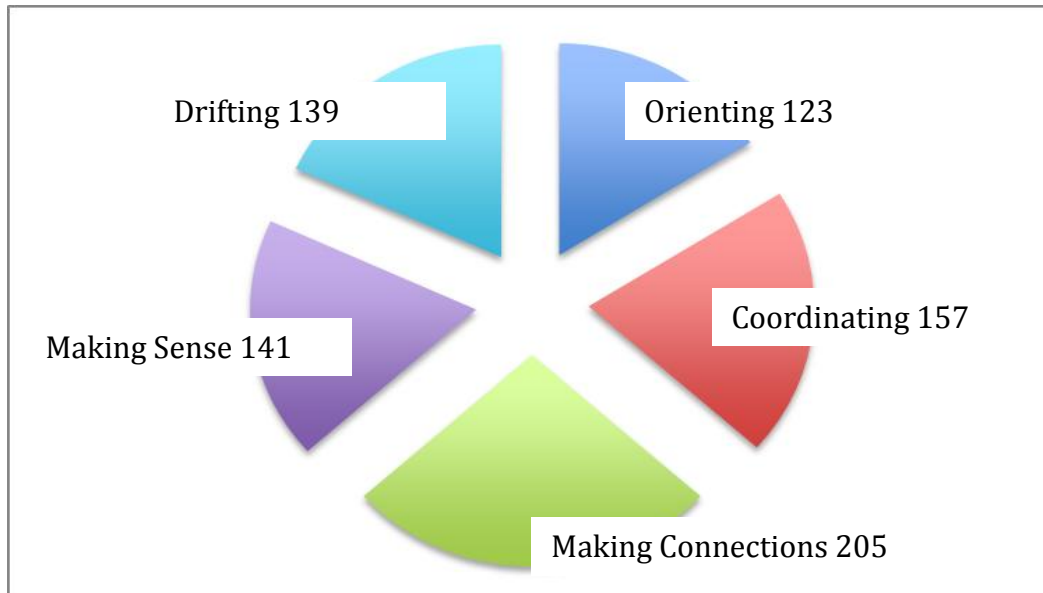
Data was entered into Nvivo8 software to calculate percentages of the transcript coded for each activity for each month, and monthly percentages were averaged. While **Figure 1** represents average proportions of all of the meetings combined, striking anomalies were noted. For example, in March when we spent about a half-hour waiting for a teacher to arrive, the 39 percent of the meeting that was “making sense” and “drifting” consisted of 2 percent “making sense” and 37 percent “drifting.” The percentages do not represent weighted values for each activity. In particular, the activity of “orienting” might have been accomplished by a few words (such as “Alright, ladies”) to get the talk back on track. Generally, 10 to 15 instances of “orienting” talk occurred in a meeting, and each was relatively brief.

**Figure 1. Average Proportion of Each Activity in Planning Meetings**



The graph in **Figure 2** shows the total number of occurrences of each activity in all of the planning sessions. The types of activities are fairly evenly distributed. “Making connections” was the most frequent activity as well as the largest proportion of the talk. While “orienting” represented only 6 percent of the talk, there were almost as many occurrences of this kind of talk as of others. While “making sense” and “drifting” occurred with almost the same frequency, “making sense” consumed a larger proportion of the time.

**Figure 2. Total Number of Occurrences of Each Type of Activity**



## Discussion

Every planning meeting included every type of activity. And every activity that was originally coded as “creating,” in which a new unit or lesson was planned, also included many of the activities in the final five categories. Given the similarities of these activities to many models of instructional design and problem solving, their presence in teacher planning also suggests the resemblance of teacher planning to learning and problem solving. In the following subsections, I will discuss each activity individually before returning to the larger picture and implications.

### Orienting

The activity of “orienting” included talk where participants opened a topic, checked in with others, or summarized a decision. Engaged in the business of planning, participants were simultaneously telling each other what was meant by planning. Talk such as, “Okay, make sure I’m not missing anything,” or “Where do we want to start?” were ways to stay together in planning. At the beginning of the school year, this was a new team, and significantly more time was spent on “orienting” in the first planning meeting as the team began to develop norms for making group decisions and working together.

### Drifting

In contrast to “orienting,” “drifting” was the place where the talk moved off-topic. Talk that was off-topic may have dealt with family or personal matters, and in this context was a way to get to know each other beyond the immediate setting and served to create bonds. “Brittany, you’re

getting like me,” Dianna teased. Very rarely could the talk be considered school gossip, but on occasion participants gained information about staff members or school procedures. Sometimes “drifting” conversation served as a place-holder while members waited for one of the teachers to join the meeting. Finally, drifting may have been a chance for teachers to vent about students or student behaviors. “Drifting,” while off topic, played an important role in planning as teachers and the school librarian shared information about themselves and the business of school.

### **Coordinating**

The activity of “coordinating” was often about teachers’ schedules and pacing. Time is both resource and constraint for educators. Dianna stated in September, “There are only nine weeks in nine weeks.” Originally coded as “scheduling,” this activity was renamed when it became apparent that schedules were something teachers took for granted and when they talked about them in planning it was to change their schedules—often to facilitate the sharing of a resource such as a single copy of a book, a shared assistant or tutor, or the library. “Coordinating” often dealt with scheduling the library, deciding how to group students, and deciding how to coordinate the content of a library lesson with classroom lessons.

### **Making Connections**

“Making connections” were the places in planning where connections were drawn between the planning topic and other topics, other resources, other years, and other grade levels. Sometimes connections were drawn to integrate the curriculum. For example, a math objective about reading a thermometer could be connected to a weather unit, or a planner might suggest that a science lesson about changing states of matter in manufacturing be connected to an economics unit about factory production. Teachers and the librarian often drew on past lesson plans or ideas they had encountered elsewhere. The school librarian was particularly key in connecting resources to unit objectives. Resources were defined broadly to include all kinds of print, technology, and community experts. The librarian also made connections with other grade levels or with school-wide events such as assemblies, author visits to the school, or a Poetry Day.

### **Making Sense**

The activity of “making sense” was most often about teaching, curriculum, and students. “Making sense” about students frequently involved informal teacher assessments about students and how they understood concepts; as Dianna said, “You have to stay on top of the way they think.” These educators were more likely to engage in making sense about what or how they were teaching. In particular, curriculum objectives from the state were often so cryptic that teachers drew on textbooks or library books to understand the objectives. For example, in interpreting the meaning of “material” the librarian read from a book, “Scientists use the word differently. To scientists the word means anything that objects are made of.” In “making sense” about teaching, participants drew on one another’s varied expertise as a resource. The mix of new and experienced teachers facilitated this as Brittany might ask how something was done, providing the other teachers with opportunities to probe one another’s thoughts as they answered.

### **“A Good Model *for* Planning”**

These findings were shared with the teachers in a member check after the analysis was completed, and they concurred with the naming and importance of the five activities. Brittany said, “I think a lot of the stuff you put on here, we do it not really realizing that we’re doing it,” and Dianna empathized that these activities were a “good model *for* planning” (her emphasis).

With the exception of “drifting,” these activities bear resemblance to various models of inquiry or problem solving (Dick and Carey 1996; Eisenberg and Berkowitz 2003; Pólya 1998).

The fact that this model does resemble models of instructional design and problem solving—with the statement of a problem (orienting), gathering data about the problem (making connections), creating a plan (coordinating), and evaluating the plan (making sense)—suggests that learning is also inherent in the plan, and that these are necessary steps in a “design for learning” (Wenger 1998).

The activity of “drifting” is perhaps a necessary inclusion as well given that this is a human endeavor, and important information about one another and the context were conveyed in these exchanges, or they simply served as a type of placeholder while we waited for participants. “Drifting” activities may have added to the sense of chaos from an outsider’s perspective but may also have provided the space necessary for participants to engage in the work of planning. Returning to the scenario that opened this paper, this analysis did find a sense of chaos in the frequent topic switches and the nonlinear proceedings, yet there were underlying patterns to the chaos, and these patterns suggest a model of problem solving and professional learning.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study were significant for several reasons: (1) they provide a description of an actual year of planning with a school librarian and teachers for a grade level; (2) patterns were uncovered in the activities of planning; (3) these activities bear strong similarity to many models of instructional design or problem solving, suggesting the learning inherent in the planning activities; and (4) the role of the school librarian was particularly strong in the activity of “making connections.”

Wolcott (1994) suggested that we abandon the linear models of planning because that's not what teachers do when they plan. While this study supported the contention that planning is not a linear process, the study did uncover persistent patterns in the type of activities that made up planning. Perhaps linear models of planning or problem solving are valuable guides for the kinds of things we should expect in planning but are not tight prescriptions for how planning should proceed. The fact that this model does resemble models of instructional design and problem solving with the statement of a problem (orienting), gathering data about the problem (making connections), creating a plan (coordinating), and evaluating the plan (making sense) suggests that learning is also inherent in the plan and that these are necessary steps in a “design for learning” (Wenger 1998).

While extensive in coverage of an entire school year, this study of teacher planning is clearly limited in its scope to one particular team of teachers and one particular school year. Further research is needed to determine if the model can be generalized beyond this study. This study raises questions about the inclusion of the school librarian as an interesting variable to consider in comparison with teacher planning where the school librarian is not present. In educational research there have been literature and research into the practice of lesson study where teachers plan, implement, observe and assess a lesson together (Rock and Wilson 2005; Lewis, Perry, and Murata 2006). Moreillon (2008) has suggested the inclusion of the school librarian in lesson study, and Bilyeu (2009) has reported on the inclusion of a school librarian in the process. The lesson-study model would provide a possible framework for extending the findings of this study beyond planning through implementation of the plan and assessment of student learning.

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