

Lesson planning for diversity

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This study investigates how three secondary subject teachers think about and take account of learner diversity in their lesson planning, enactment and reviewing, with a specific focus on pupils designated as having special educational needs (SEN). The study is significant in the context of international moves in contemporary school teaching towards greater personalisation and inclusion. Focussing on three different subject teachers whose lesson planning was nominated as high quality, the study uses a sequence of interviews and lesson observations alongside the analysis of lesson planning artefacts, to present three in-depth cases and, through cross-case analysis, to develop a provisional situated model of lesson planning for diversity. Different forms of planning are identified – formal, personal, expanded and in-flight – which differ with regard to dimensions of purpose, formality, whether recorded, and timing. The teachers' understandings of diversity are broader than differences related to SEN, and this relates to different kinds of differentiation, connecting the concerns of special needs education with wider issues of lesson planning for diversity.

Introduction

This paper reports a study which examined how the lesson planning of secondary school teachers takes account of learner diversity. Lesson planning is regarded as good practice by policy-makers in England (DfE, 2013; Independent Teacher Workload Review Group, 2016) and internationally (Mutton, Hagger and Burn, 2011) and is a key component of initial teacher training (Fautley and Savage, 2013). The process of lesson planning reflects continuing challenges and dilemmas in teaching that have been recognised for decades (Berlak and Berlak, 1981), for example, the balance between subject content demands and learner needs (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, et al., 2005). The enactment of plans that take account of learner differences is particularly important in contemporary school teaching relating to issues of personalisation and inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2011). Despite its perceived importance, however, research in this topic has been sporadic (Hughes, 2005). This study investigated how teachers think about and take account of learner difference and diversity in their lesson planning and reviewing with a specific

focus on pupils designated as having special educational needs (SEN). As a result, a provisional situated model of lesson planning for diversity is developed.

Literature context

It is widely recognised that lesson planning is an important part of the teaching process (Bassett, Bowler and Newton, 2013). Lesson planning has had prominence in UK policy-led curriculum and pedagogical reform since the 1960s (John, 2006), and it is a requirement of the Teachers' Standards in England (DfE, 2013, p. 11) that teachers 'plan and teach well-structured lessons'. Despite this recognition that planning is an important teaching skill, the schools' inspectorate in England, OfSTED, '*does not* require schools to provide individual lesson plans to inspectors' and '*does not* specify how planning should be set out' (OfSTED, 2015, p. 1, original emphasis). Ofsted goes on to state, however, that 'inspectors are interested in the effectiveness of planning rather than the form it takes' (p. 1). This confusion over the need (or not) for a lesson plan highlights an enduring issue in teacher lesson preparation: whether it is the product, that is, a concrete lesson plan, or the planning process itself which is most significant.

Tyler (1949) is frequently cited as an early contributor to the development of lesson planning, particularly in its most transmissive form as an outcomes-oriented approach to planning with a 'backward design process' (Rusznayak and Walton, 2011, p. 274). Fundamental to this model is the specification of specific observable objectives, the selection and organisation of learning experiences for the attainment of these objectives, followed by evaluation of these learning experiences (Zazkis, Liljedahl and Sinclair, 2009). This model is 'pervasive' (John, 2006, p. 484) and the basis of most lesson plans (Bassett, Bowler and Newton, 2013). Although the extensive nature of some lesson planning templates can be overwhelming (Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis, 2011), most initial teacher education programmes require student teachers to devise lesson plans according to a prescribed format, often on a given template (Zazkis, Liljedahl and Sinclair, 2009). A prevailing official lesson discourse is, thus, reflected in the lesson plan (Linné, 2001). Zazkis, Liljedahl and Sinclair (2009) suggest that there are inherent risks if the template acts as a 'proxy for preparation' and, further, that student teachers do not receive 'the full benefit of the work that went into creating it [the lesson plan template], but rather

an empty shell that stands in the place of grounded theories of teaching practice' (p. 40). Further, Rusznyak and Walton's (2011) analysis of approaches to lesson planning for student teachers showed that the *product* of the action of lesson planning was emphasised, rather than the value of the *process* itself.

Some commentators (e.g., Calderhead, 1996; John, 2006) have critiqued the apparent linearity of the outcomes-oriented model (with all steps emerging from the aims and objectives in a linear, rational ends-means sequence), in that it disregards the contingencies and complexity of teaching, the classroom environment and the impact of outside factors, such as organisational and personal issues. An alternative approach sees lesson planning emerging from teachers' beliefs about learner needs (Egan, 1992, 1997; John, 2006; Stenhouse, 1975). In this model of lesson planning, objectives flow from the activities themselves, teachers can pursue goals that emerge rather than adhere to a pre-determined plan (John, 2006). This study seeks to explore which, why and how these models are used by teachers in their lesson planning and its enactment.

Planning for learner diversity is seen in policy as an important part of inclusive teachers' repertoire (DfE, 2013; EADSNE, 2012), with a focus on supporting *all* learners. The Teachers' Standards in England state that teachers are expected to 'adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils' (DfE, 2013, p. 11); this includes 'understand[ing] the needs of all pupils including those with SEN; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language and those with disabilities' (DfE, 2013, p. 12). While this study focuses, to some extent, on one specific area of learner diversity, SEN, it is suggested that 'effective teaching for those with special needs has direct relevance to effective teaching in general' (Wedell, 2005, p. 7). Further, Hughes (2005) argues that the success of particular diverse sub-groups becomes an indicator for the state of the education system as a whole. Within the field of SEN, there is a literature and debate about the existence and nature of specialised pedagogies for pupils with SEN (Lewis and Norwich, 2005) as well as a growing literature about what is involved in 'inclusive pedagogy' (Booth and Ainscow, 2011; Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian and Spratt, 2013). The former literature is about whether there are distinctive kinds of pedagogy for children designated as having different types of SEN, for example, autism. This involves theoretical analysis of the nature of difference in pedagogic planning – whether to think about teaching in terms of individual or general differences. The latter literature is about how teachers can plan for diversity in their classes without pre-deciding how to allocate different tasks to different (groups of) children. Booth and Ainscow (2011, p. 159) suggest, for example, that learning in an inclusive school should be 'orchestrated' so that 'learning activities are planned with all children in mind'. The concept of universal design for learning, commonly referred to in the

USA, is pertinent here, presenting a 'universal up-front approach to planning' (Williams, Evans and King, 2012, p. 214). This is echoed in Florian and Black-Hawkins' (2011, p. 818) principles of inclusive pedagogy: 'creating learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available for everyone; extending what is ordinarily available for all learners rather than using teaching and learning strategies that are suitable for most alongside something 'additional' or 'different' for some who experience difficulties'. Teachers' perspectives on specialised and inclusive pedagogy in relation to learner diversity are, therefore, an important aspect of the lesson planning process.

Empirical research about lesson planning has also focussed on the 'in-flight' thinking (Paterson, 2007) of experienced teachers as they operate in the classroom. In a reflective account of her teaching, Lampert (2001) described how planning and preparation for teaching a lesson involved thinking about the appropriateness of tasks for different learners in addition to content and structure. Although she began by designing mathematical tasks using her knowledge of the students, once she implemented these tasks, she often shifted her actions in accordance with students' responses. This demonstrates a distinction between planning and its enactment. Other authors express similar ideas based on their reflections on practice. For example, Bellamy (2005, p. 82) notes, in her examination of her own lessons, that differentiation of a lesson plan (often by outcome or task) is only the first stage and is followed by 'a succession of more subtle forms of differentiation which are embedded into the fabric of the lesson itself'. A lesson plan may be presented as if it were a functionalist artefact, but the manner in which the lesson is conducted, the way in which it is enacted, is based in interaction. The lesson is like a performance, preceded by composition (the lesson planning) but affected by interpretation and improvisation (Alexander, 2000).

The literature, thus, highlights the policy interest in lesson planning, debates about the linear or interactive nature of lesson planning, and differentiation of learning activities in the planning process in response to learner diversity in moves towards greater inclusion. Within this context, this study aimed to investigate teachers' lesson planning processes in relation to diversity, specifically to pupils with SEN, with the following research questions:

- How do teachers, whose lesson planning is nominated as high quality, think about and cater for diversity in their lesson planning?
- How can commonalities between lesson planning be used to develop a situated model about lesson planning for diversity?

Methods

An exploratory case study methodology (Yin, 2009) was used, selected as an appropriate research approach to enhance understanding of individual teachers within the

Table 1: School and teacher details

Teacher name*	Subject	School	Teacher experience
Jen	Mathematics	Secondary community school, suburban, approximately 1300 pupils	34 years, 18 years in this school
Rebecca	English	As above	4 years, all in this school
Peter	Design and technology	Secondary academy convertor, centre of large town, approximately 1000 pupils	18 years, all in this school

Note: *Pseudonyms.

‘real’ educational context (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013) of lesson planning for diversity, while allowing for and capturing the complexity of the situation. The case studies were of three mainstream secondary school teachers. In Stake’s (1995) terms, these could be classed as ‘instrumental’ case studies as only a specific focussed aspect of the teachers’ educational lives was studied. Each teacher’s lesson planning was explored through interviews, observations and lesson planning documents and artefacts. Sensitising concepts from the literature review were used in designing data collection and analysis methods while remaining open to emerging ideas.

The participants

The three teacher participants were a purposive sample from two secondary schools in the South West of England. Schools were selected according to the following criteria: partnership schools with the researchers’ university; rated as good or outstanding by the inspection agency (OfSTED); geographically convenient; and agreement to participate in the project. We requested case teachers who taught the subject areas of English, Mathematics or Design and Technology (DT); these subjects were chosen as being either a core subject or a more practical subject. We also specified that the case study classes should contain at least two pupils with SEN, including at least one low-incidence need.

Some schools declined to participate because of general workload and busyness; others stated that they did not have classes which matched the project requirements; one suggested that their lesson plans did not specifically indicate planning for diversity, stating that teachers in a subject department are expected to follow a set of detailed plans provided by the department and not deviate from them. Senior teachers in the schools which agreed to participate were asked to nominate potential teachers in the three subject areas based on their ‘competence and good practice’ in the area of general lesson planning. One

school reported that teachers were reluctant to participate because they did not see themselves as skilled at planning and they did not feel there was a very diverse school population. Recruitment of schools and teachers for the project was thus difficult, leading to a smaller number of participants than originally intended. Table 1 gives contextual details about the schools and teachers involved.

Ethical protocols

Ethical approval was gained from the researchers’ university ethics committee. Schools, participating teachers, any other adults and pupils have been anonymised. An information sheet was provided for all participating schools and staff, and a consent form stating participating teachers’ rights (including confidentiality) was provided and signed by the participants before data collection commenced. All participants were made aware of their right to withdraw for any (and no) reason.

Data collection

After an initial acquaintance/reconnaissance meeting, two cycles of data collection involving lesson ‘planning-enactment-review’ were arranged for each teacher (Table 2).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews incorporated a list of topics, with provisional questions provided in advance to the teachers, and were also informed by examination of lesson planning artefacts (e.g., lesson plan, class lists, seating plans). Interview 1 focused on pre-lesson planning, as well as exploration of the teachers’ understandings of SEN, diversity, and inclusion. It also sought to identify school expectations regarding planning and the inclusion of children with SEN. Interview 2 was split into two parts, one part immediately following the first observed lesson, with a focus on asking the teachers to review and reflect on their lesson in relation to their earlier planning, focussing on ‘in-flight’ thinking (Paterson, 2007), in-the-moment decision-making, and planning. The second part

Table 2: Data collection sequence

Planning	Enactment	Lesson 1 review-lesson 2 planning	Enactment	Lesson 2 review
Interview 1	Observation lesson 1	Interview 2	Observation lesson 2	Interview 3

of interview 2, held before the lesson 2 observation, centred on the planning for that lesson, how their review of the first lesson had contributed to planning for the lesson, as well as further questioning arising from the researcher reflecting on previous interview recordings. The final interview (3) was a reflection on the enactment of lesson 2 with the inclusion of stimulated recall questions (Lyle, 2003), with the researcher highlighting an incident noted during a lesson observation, and asking the teacher to comment, elaborate and explain their thinking and decision-making around the selected episode. Each interview was recorded using a voice-recording application on a tablet device and then transcribed.

Lesson observations

The non-participatory observations focussed on how the pre-planning was enacted in practice. Unstructured free-flow observation notes included general comments on the lesson and the lesson plan, incidents to reflect on and questions to follow up with the teacher in the interviews.

Lesson artefacts

Artefacts included: formal lesson plans (3 teachers) (and associated worksheets); class lists (2) [with some including information on pupils' SEN status and pupil premium¹ (PP) and free school meal (FSM) status]; seating plans (2); SEN register for a year group (2); and a student profile (1).

Data analysis

Data analysis was carried out in two stages. Stage one related to the first research question and involved individual teacher case study analyses. Lesson plans and artefacts were content analysed to identify specific elements relevant to the lesson planning process. Observation notes and interview transcripts were analysed together using thematic qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), through a process of thematic coding. The first author coded Interviews 1 and 2 for one teacher, using pre-set codes from the literature and research questions and developing new codes, all exemplified by text extracts. The generated code list was then separately applied and developed by the first author and the research assistant to a further interview. The codes were subsequently shared, discussed, defined and agreed before being applied to the remaining interview transcripts. The following broad themes emerged: learner diversity influences on lesson planning; differentiation; support for planning; lesson planning (consisting of written formal lesson plans, written personal lesson plans and, what we have termed, expanded planning); specific planning for diversity; and enactment of planning.

¹The pupil premium is additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>.

For the second research question, cross-case analysis was conducted, comparing components of lesson planning across the three teachers, by applying the above themes as starting points across each case and identifying additional emergent sub-themes within this structure. Commonalities across each of the case accounts were identified when there were two or three sources for each sub-theme and, drawing upon these, a situated conceptual model was constructed in terms of their process relationship.

Analysis

The analysis is presented in two parts. The first relates to the first research question about how teachers think about and cater for diversity in their lesson planning. This is presented as summary case study accounts loosely organised according to the six themes. In the second part, the cross-case analysis is presented in terms of the common sub-themes and as a conceptual map/model representing and connecting these aspects of lesson planning for diversity.

Part 1: Summary case accounts

Jen. Two successive mathematics lessons on 'investigating number patterns' were observed with the same mixed-ability year 7 (aged 11–12 years) class. The class of 28 included one pupil with 'developmental coordination disorder' and seven pupils who were identified as having specific learning difficulties (SpLD).

Jen received class lists at the start of the year which included student status details in terms of FSM, SEN and PP, and she used the latter two designations in her lesson planning. The SEN details on the list included the category of SEN, for example, SpLD, and a brief summary of need, in this case further described as 'weak literacy skills, followed in most cases by the generic request to 'please make classroom adjustments'. For Jen the implication of such an SEN designation meant that, given the provided information, 'within your lesson you need to follow some strategies in order for them to access what you're doing'. These actions, she said, could be about class seating arrangements for identified students, or deciding how their particular need will 'affect them in your subject', making sure that they 'are catered for within the lesson'. Jen recognised that having a SEN did not necessarily mean finding mathematics difficult and she also had a more general conception of needs, beyond SEN, understanding inclusion as 'being aware of each individual student's needs and making sure that you cover their needs in some way'. For her, this was about 'encouraging all students to enjoy the maths lessons and to help every student make progress in each and every lesson'.

Jen described how she was more likely to think about students' mathematics ability than their SEN when

planning. There were two occasions when Jen said that she might plan separate tasks or activities: (1) for a specific child with a particular need; and (2) when a teaching assistant (TA) was supporting a group of students with SEN. When teaching without TA support, her approach was to plan the same activity for everyone in her class and differentiate it, 'slightly altering a task or chopping up a task in order to make it accessible to all the students', rather than have separate activities. Differentiation was both pre-planned and occurred spontaneously during the lesson. Jen reflected that: 'you do have to be prepared to adapt'. Jen used her knowledge about particular students to adapt the planned activity during one lesson, for example, allowing the use of a calculator for one student.

Jen was expected to base her lessons on the department's scheme of work for each year group. Although resources and longer term planning were shared between staff, lesson plans were individual: 'we've tried several times to do it [share] but it is quite a personal thing, lesson planning'. In her planning, Jen drew on knowledge of the SEN and PP status of pupils, her own knowledge of any particular needs in mathematics and, particularly, TAs' knowledge of individual pupils: 'they do tend to know the students because they follow them round all the time'. Jen produced a written formal lesson plan for both observed lessons, handwritten on an official school format used when teaching is monitored for performance management purposes. This was an A4 page split into five boxes: aim; resources/differentiation; starter activity; activities; plenary. Rather than this official school format, however, Jen usually used 'just something written in my planner' (a diary broken down into lesson times) where she recorded 'the same kind of thing'. Planning for Jen also went beyond this personal lesson plan to include thinking about seating arrangements (expanded planning). She used peer-tutoring, seating students in positions where they could 'share their work and ideas'. Her seating plan was used as a working document and amended as different groupings were tried. She placed 'a dot' by the names of students 'to keep a little eye on in every lesson and touch base with frequently'. Based on teaching them for a few weeks, Jen had assigned these nine pupils into her own three levels of action (no action, moderate and high action).

Rebecca. Rebecca was observed teaching two successive English lessons with a mixed-ability year 8 class (aged 12–13 years) focussed on discussing and writing about opinions and comparisons. The class had 24 pupils, seven of whom had a designation of SEN, including one with a statement of SEN.² Two had autism diagnoses, two had 'dyslexic difficulties', one had dyspraxia, one had a

hearing impairment and another had 'developmental coordination difficulties'.

Rebecca received a list of pupils with SEN from the school's SEN Coordinator (SENCO) at the start of the year, which was then updated termly. Further information could be obtained from a computer database, including general learning targets, such as 'to be more organised'. Rebecca used the SEN list to inform her planning at the start of the year and when planning units of work. She sometimes found, however, that the general points did not relate to her subject teaching and with time she did not need to consult the information as 'you get to know your classes'. SEN, for Rebecca, had a broad meaning: 'anything that is going to affect the way somebody learns in my classroom', what she called a 'barrier'. In her view providing for pupils with SEN was one of the most important aspects of her work. For example, in planning a unit on poetry, she realised the pupils with autism might struggle with metaphor, so she decided to make the teaching more concrete; she noted that in this way she was also 'helping the whole class' to be more 'creative and open minded'. Rebecca's conception of learner diversity went beyond SEN to include pupil background, PP status, learning style, gender and 'willingness to ask for help'. In particular, she talked about the class in terms of English abilities, which she broke down into 'rounded ability' (in writing, reading and oral expression) and those 'good' in some areas and not in others.

Rebecca regarded planning as 'knowing where you're going and how you're going to get there'. Long- and medium-term plans in English were developed by the department as a whole and Rebecca used these to plan lessons. She talked about resources and ideas being shared between teachers in the department and, in addition, she made use of online resources. Specific support for planning for diversity, she said, may come from the school's SEN department through whole school training, for example, teaching visually impaired students, or from an on-site unit for pupils with autism. She had also received external advice about teaching poetry to students with autism. Joint planning with a TA took place at the start of a unit of teaching to see if they could anticipate any problems in relation to any of the unit activities.

Rebecca provided a formal lesson plan template developed for observation by senior management which contained prompts about expectations of teachers in their planning. She also used the four part structure of lessons encouraged in the school – starter, introduction, development, plenary. The 'real' lesson plan for Rebecca was the notes she wrote in her own planner, drafted a few days in advance of a lesson. These acted as a 'working document' that might change; without her planner, she felt that 'she would be lost'. Rebecca's planning also included a seating plan, decided with the TA, which took account of class and individual pupil characteristics.

²A statement of SEN forms the final stage of the graduated stages and is a legal document which sets out a child's SEN and the support they should receive. This has now been superseded by an Educational Health and Care Plan (DfE/DoH, 2015).

Rebecca felt that her planning was affected by her belief that every student and every class was different. She sometimes planned with a specific group of boys in mind ‘who respond better to getting up out of their seat and moving around the room’ and planned verbal activities for pupils ‘who have problems with their written work’. She also recorded specific pupil names to check on, or to remind her to create specific resources, for example, a pupil needing enlarged text. Rebecca was aware of the importance of teacher adaptability and flexibility, such as extending an activity or exploring something new that arises. She also engaged in in-flight planning and decision-making, for example, whether to reorganise groups that the pupils had self-selected.

Differentiation took three forms for Rebecca. Differentiation by activity was about ‘all going in the same direction and they’ve all got the same end, but the tasks they do along the way may be slightly different’. Differentiation through grouping involved selecting different groups, for example, mixing ‘outgoing’ and ‘quieter’ pupils. With regard to differentiation by outcome, she noted that she may have different goals for ‘gifted and talented’ pupils, for example, writing more or using more quotes. Rather than singling out specific pupils for these goals, however, she would openly invite all students: ‘if you want an extra challenge then why don’t you try doing this?’

Peter. Peter was observed teaching two Resistant Materials lessons with the same year 9 class (aged 13–14 years) of 14 pupils. One pupil had a statement of SEN for two areas of need – speech, language and communication needs, and cognition and learning. Peter thought that a couple of other pupils also had SEN and that there were ‘several with attention deficiency disorder’.

Peter received information about pupils with SEN via a note in the attendance register. In addition, he was provided with student reports and profiles for pupils who have statements of SEN on the staff shared computer network. The profile gave details of the type of SEN, the main areas of concern (how these were manifested and impact on learning), contextual information and strategies for support. For the pupil with a statement in the class, the stated support strategies were ‘a high level of support to access the curriculum, needs constant supervision’. Peter recognised that he did not always look up this information: ‘it’s finding the time to do that’, especially as he had a new class every 8 weeks. He also noted that sometimes the first indication of having a pupil with SEN in a class, if he had not consulted the register, was that they arrived to the lesson with a TA. For Peter, SEN was about needing extra help and guidance; pupils with SEN did not ‘fit into the school system’ largely due to the rigidity of this system. Peter believed his role was to support all students regardless of abilities and SEN and that being inclusive meant ‘the involvement of every student

in every activity’. Aspects of learner diversity for him included learning styles, speed of learning, levels of motivation, creative thinking, ability to work as a team, and high abilities as well as abilities in DT.

Peter mentioned online resources, department subject schemes of work and subject-specific school improvement plans that informed his lesson planning. These did not take account of diversity: ‘we just plan for the majority’. Peter tries to ‘integrate’ all the pupils, ‘start for the same level and then adapt as I go’; he does not ‘spend a lot of time planning for special needs children in particular’ as ‘I just haven’t got the time’. A main support for his planning for student diversity came from TAs, for example, in redesigning homework tasks and rewriting certain assignment tasks. The support provided by these assistants was ‘invaluable’; ‘they know the child, how they work and they pass on that information to us’.

Peter produced a formal plan for both lessons, handwritten on an official school format to match OfSTED guidelines about an outstanding lesson. The document contained two and half pages of additional guidance in addition to a template – a combination of boxes for adding key information and lists with tick boxes, for example, for kinds of assessment for learning, activity type and differentiation (divided into teacher support, outcome, questioning, grouping, equipment/resource, learning style). These plans were usually only used for performance management observations. Peter’s personal lesson planning was recorded as notes in his planner including the lesson objective, activities and how to end the lesson. He felt confident in doing this given his teaching experience and saw that its main purpose was to give order to the lesson. Planning for Peter also incorporated seating arrangements and sometimes specific approaches or alternative activities for some pupils. For Peter, differentiation was a tool to ensure inclusion, ‘adapting the pace and complexity to the student’s ability and hope[ing] to arrive at the same goal but with various levels of outcome’, for example, spending extra time with some pupils. Peter drew on his teaching experience to make adaptations in the middle of a lesson: if they ‘are struggling, then there’s something wrong here, perhaps we’ll take it down a few notches’. He described how he was able to gain additional knowledge about all pupils by walking around during lessons which highlighted pupils who may need more attention and informed future planning. He also noted that, with the 8-week DT programme cycle and with little pre-group information, it usually took 2 weeks for needs to become evident to him.

Part 2: Cross-case analysis

Table 3 shows common themes and sub-themes from the cross-case analysis. The emboldened main themes are taken from the individual analyses, with the addition of in-flight thinking/planning, the sub-themes (not emboldened) emerged from secondary cross-case analysis and

Table 3: Common themes and sub-themes

Learner diversity influences on lesson planning
SEN general information
SEN register pupil information (updated)
Own-derived assessment of needs in subject
Coming to know pupils better
Support for planning
TA input
Department medium/long-term plans
Online resources
Shared staff resources
Lesson planning
Written formal lesson planning
Purposes and use
Structure
Personal lesson planning
Nature
Purpose
Expanded planning
What it is
Recorded plan for specific pupil
Seating plan
Seating for specific pupil with SEN
In-flight thinking/planning
Specific planning for diversity
SEN covered by ability led planning
Differentiation
Approach used for pupils with SEN
Types of differentiation
Challenges
When to differentiate by task
Enactment of planning
Flexibility
Enacted plans observed

were common to two or three of the teachers; this enables some degree of generality in constructing the situated model. To give one example, the data excerpt ‘She noted that the lists are updated termly and she could get further information from a computer database’ represents the sub-theme ‘SEN register pupil info (updated)’ within the main theme, ‘Learner diversity influences on lesson planning’. As another example, the data excerpt ‘He recognises the TAs that support some children with SEN are ‘invaluable’ because ‘they know the child. They know how they work and they pass on that information to us and we can if necessary adapt the teaching to suit’ represents the sub-theme ‘TA input’ within the main theme ‘Support for Planning’.³

³Further details of the thematic analyses can be obtained from the authors.

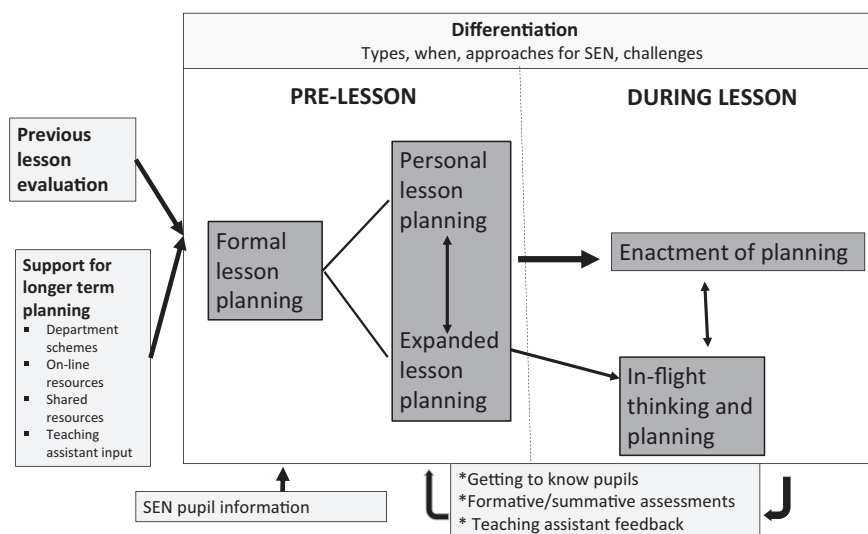
Figure 1 presents a provisional conceptual model of lesson planning for diversity, with specific reference to including pupils with SEN. One key element of this analysis is the relationship between the *formal lesson planning*, what is written on an institutional template, the *personal lesson planning*, which is personal to the teacher and written in a semi-structured form in a diary or planner, and *expanded planning*. Expanded planning goes beyond what is in the written formal or personal lesson plan to include further details which may be written/recorded, for example, pupil seating plans, or in-mind, for example, planning to ‘touch base’ with particular individuals during their lesson. The various kinds of planning before the lesson are directly linked to the flexible *enactment of planning* during the lesson, but also mediated by in-flight thinking and planning (the planning-in-action that emerges in response to how the lesson was progressing and evaluated by the teacher), for example, making changes to the lesson activities, grouping structures and timings depending on various clues they were picking up on.

The cross-case analysis identified various aspects about *differentiation*, which, though understood slightly differently by these three teachers, was generally considered to be about making the lesson accessible to all pupils. These aspects included the different types of differentiation, when differentiation by task, outcome, grouping or activity was used and when not, the differentiation relevant to pupils with identified SEN and the challenges of differentiation. Differentiation was planned for in the pre-lesson planning and additional differentiation was also evidenced during the lessons themselves, hence it spans the ‘pre-lesson’ and ‘during lesson’ parts of Figure 1.

The analysis also showed that lesson planning was informed by various sources. Support for longer term lesson planning came from diverse sources such as departmental schemes of work, online resources, shared resources within a department and TA inputs about particular pupils. Lesson planning, along with ongoing lesson evaluation, was also informed by information about *pupil characteristics* in the class such as the SEN pupil information given to teachers by the SENCO, indicated in the class register or available on an electronic school system. Such information varied in detail and was often quite general. Teachers’ ideas about learner characteristics, particularly in relation to the specific subject, were also developed from their experience with learners in their lessons, through formative and summative assessments and from TA feedback, and were not always deduced from a provided list of pre-identified pupils.

Discussion

The case study accounts illustrate the point made by Hughes (2005) that lesson planning, whether it is recorded or in-mind, is central to the link between the

Figure 1: Conceptual model of lesson planning for including pupils with SEN

curriculum and the quality of teaching. The case studies and conceptual model also show how lesson teaching, as previously noted, can be considered to be like an artistic performance (Alexander, 2000). The performance is preceded by lesson planning (the composition or the script) but affected by interpretation and improvisation (in-flight planning).

The distinction between formal planning and personal planning is partly a result of the formal plan being used for performance management and appraisal purposes and not being required for all lessons. Personal planning is what teachers do in their own way when planning lessons on a regular basis: it is lesson specific and recorded in note form, using some of the elements of the formal plan and thus seems to be based on internalising of some elements of the formal lesson planning process (Johnson, 2000), the notes acting as prompts to the in-mind planning for the lesson. Expanded planning is additional to the teachers' personal plan and, while identified in the pre-lesson phase, runs into enactment and in-flight planning. What is typically called a 'lesson plan' is often the product of formal planning for evaluative purposes, which as this study shows, is far less important than the subtle and layered process of planning before and during lessons. This is consistent with Fautley and Savage's (2013) perspective that the process of lesson planning is more important than the product.

The case studies do show the influence of the linear objectives model of planning (John, 2006; Zazkis, Liljedahl and Sinclair, 2009), but they also illustrate the extent to which teachers review and adapt their teaching after the initial planning and during the lesson itself (Egan, 1997; John, 2006; Stenhouse, 1975). In this sense, planning for diversity might be a formal process from some perspectives, but is also an informal, interactive,

ongoing process. The distinction which emerged from these cases between formal planning, personal planning, expanded planning and in-flight planning shows that different aspects of lesson planning relate to different purposes: formal for evaluative purposes and personal and expanded for formative and practical purposes. The cases demonstrate that some planning is recorded in writing, to act as aids to memory and cues for enactment. Formal, personal and expanded forms of lesson planning had elements recorded in writing, but expanded planning was also in-mind. It is this in-mind aspect of expanded planning that connected to in-flight planning that took place during lessons in response to contingencies.

The teachers' understandings of diversity were much broader than differences related to SEN. When asked to define learner diversity, each of the teachers described a host of different groupings or 'pupil types', for example, abilities in the subject, preferred learning styles, background, gender and behaviour. In two of the cases, there was a focus on treating every learner as an individual, each of whom may need support, and one teacher described how all pupils may face barriers to learning. It was also clear from the case studies that these teachers saw lesson planning for pupils with SEN to be part of planning for a wider diversity and saw this in terms of different kinds of differentiation. This connects the concerns of special needs education with wider issues of lesson planning for diversity (Wedell, 2005). This means that planning for a pupil with SEN may have applicability to other areas of diversity and that planning for other aspects of diversity might be applicable to pupils with SEN. The case studies illustrated both aspects of this relationship.

These teachers used usual types of differentiation in their planning (Cowne, 2015) but also revealed that

differentiation by outcome was more common than by task or activity. As one teacher revealed, this was about the time required to plan alternative activities, which was carried out more frequently when there was a TA in support or when a pupil, for example, with a statement, required a *specific* adaptation. For two of the teachers, planning differentiated activities was seen as challenging in terms of availability of finance and TA support.

One of the teachers made a point of not singling out pupils for specific extension activities, allowing pupils to choose whether they wanted to try them. This is in keeping with a no-labelling approach to differentiation suggested by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), but this and the other teachers did use pupil categories of various kinds to plan and allocate adapted materials and activities for some pupils in their lessons.

The analysis also showed how teachers' knowledge about pupils' characteristics and their needs derived from various sources which are at different levels of generality with regard to their lesson planning. The provided SEN pupil information was often about general difficulties that might need to be translated into teaching implications for the pupil concerned or might not apply to the planning of specific lessons. The subject they taught provided the main frame for identifying learner characteristics, which derived from coming to know the specific pupils through teaching and assessing their learning. This finding underlines the importance of how teachers' knowledge about the areas of SEN for teaching is moderated by subject and personal learner characteristics. The analysis also illustrated how these teachers relied on TAs for their knowledge of specific pupils in planning lessons. This adds another perspective to the focus of interest around deploying TAs (Russell, Webster and Blatchford, 2013).

Concluding comments

The case studies in this study involved teachers who were nominated as showing high-quality lesson planning. These case studies, based on the analysis of relevant documents and interviews before and after lessons informed by lesson observations, illustrated how teachers think about and cater for diversity in their lesson planning. They were then used to develop a situated model about lesson planning for diversity.

This is a small scale but holistic and in-depth investigation and analysis which, as much case study research, is intended to be illustrative rather than representative or definitive, providing context-dependent knowledge (Flyvberg, 2006). The integration of different data sources, a key element of case study research (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, et al., 2017), including the joint and iterative focus of lesson plans, interviews and lesson observations, and the involvement and agreement of two researchers in the coding processes, in particular, add to the credibility and dependability of the analysis and case study accounts

(Lincoln and Guba, 2000). As noted earlier, there was some reluctance of schools and teachers to take part, which reduced the number of participants. From this, however, we assumed that those who participated were not only nominated for their planning and teaching, but were confident to display it to scrutiny.

The qualitative case study accounts detail lesson planning for diversity in real-life secondary school contexts and illuminate an important process in teaching that is relevant to the movement to greater inclusion in schools. The emergent situated conceptual model of lesson planning for diversity/SEN provides the basis for further study, on one hand, and on the other, for questions that are relevant to the initial and continuing professional learning of teachers teaching more diverse classes. This provisional model also has potential for future research, for example, to examine what informs teachers' in-flight planning and how they respond to their understanding of pupil differences in terms of the resources available to them.

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