Veteran and Novice Teachers' Reflective Inquiry in Collaborative Planning

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Abstract: Collaborative reflective inquiry in teacher communities of practice (CoP) supports their professional learning. However, the model of CoP entails at least three limitations and challenges for teacher learning: novice teachers can seldom act as legitimate peripheral participants; veterans' learning is neglected; and power dynamics between veteran and novices may constrain the group's reflective inquiry and, consequently, its learning. In this case-study, we explore the dynamics between veteran and novice science teachers in a collaborative planning session in a science professional development community and their implications for the group's reflective inquiry. We use linguistic ethnographic micro-analytic methods to analyze audio and video recordings of the session. The findings demonstrate how in a collaborative planning context, legitimate peripheral participation is afforded, moderating face threats and thus supporting learning for both novice and veteran teachers. The study highlights the unique affordances of collaborative planning for science teachers' reflective inquiry, advancing our understanding of the social dimension of teachers' learning. This study contributes to the fields of teacher learning in CoPs, teacher planning and elementary science teacher learning.

Keywords: Teacher learning; professional development; science teachers; planning; veteran and novice; face; teacher reflection; teacher inquiry; linguistic ethnography.

Introduction

Educational scholars advocate teacher learning communities, suggesting that the interaction within them facilitates learning about teaching, particularly when this includes reflective inquiry into practice (Horn, 2010; Little, 1990; Spillane et al., 2018.). Teaching is a complex endeavor: it requires that teachers continually process a multitude of data and respond on the spot (Labaree, 2000). To contend with this complexity, teachers are encouraged to develop reflective inquiry skills and habits. In combining the flexibility and openness of reflection (Dewey, 1933) with the systematism of inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), learning communities can support teachers' examination of the causal relations between teaching and learning, while considering different perspectives and possible implications for action (Horn, 2010). Yet, there are many challenges to reflective inquiry in teacher learning communities, one of which being the power dynamics between veteran and novice teachers, which may constrain their participation, the group's reflective inquiry, and, consequently, its learning (Liu, 2013; Sutton & Shouse, 2018). Issues of public image, or face (Goffman, 1955), can be a particular obstacle to reflective inquiry (Vedder-Weiss, Segal & Lefstein, 2019) in the context of novice-veteran relations. In addition, studies show that the quality of reflective inquiry in a learning community may vary with the nature or purpose of the activity the group is engaged in. The framing of an activity as reflection, feedback, or planning may shape how the interaction between veterans and novices unfolds (John, 2006; Koellner, 2007). This case-study explores the dynamics between a novice teacher and two veteran teachers in a collaborative lesson planning session. It demonstrates how in a collaborative planning context, mentoring relations can support reflective inquiry and learning for both novice and veteran teachers, thereby highlighting the unique affordances of collaborative planning for reflective inquiry.

Background and theoretical framework

Teacher collaborative learning in communities of practice

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest understanding learning as a change in participation through the process of making an individual a member of a community of practice. Such learning is a social process, whereby the learner moves from "peripheral participation" towards a central position in the community ("full participation"). In this process, veterans serve as mentors to novice participants through apprenticeship. Teacher learning communities meet Lave and Wenger's definition of a community of practice if teachers are *mutually engaged* in a *joint enterprise* with a *joint repertoire* of practices to advance their aims. However, the notion of teacher communities of practice contradicts the perception of teachers' knowledge as individually constructed and their work as

isolated, taking place behind closed doors (Little, 1990). This tension may be resolved by teachers' sharing everyday experiences and tasks with colleagues and making them accessible sources for collaborative learning in a community of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Little, 1990).

Reflective inquiry in teacher collaborative learning

Teaching is a complex and unpredictable practice, requiring the development of adaptive expertise (Labaree, 2000), which includes sensitivity to moments in teaching requiring immediate response, as well as the ability to analyze and interpret such moments and weigh alternative courses of action from a rich repertoire of practices (Lefstein & Snell, 2014). Given the lack of time to develop these complex skills during hectic classroom events, collaborative reflective inquiry in teacher communities, before and after teaching, is a critical resource for developing adaptive expertise. Collaborative reflective inquiry can make teachers' thinking accessible to peers, turning tacit professional knowledge into explicit shared knowledge (Clark & Yinger, 1979; Little, 1990). We conceptualize teacher reflective inquiry discourse as characterized by: (1) explicit reflective thinking; (2) multiple perspectives and voices; (3) pedagogical reasoning; and (4) connections between teaching, learning, and content (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Horn, 2010).

Veteran and novice teachers and the development of professional vision

Research suggests that the difference in the institutional roles of novice and veteran teachers impacts their participation in the discourse in the learning community and, consequently, their learning. Veteran teachers are often perceived as accomplished professionals whose role is to socialize novices (Liu, 2013) and help solve problems (Sutton & Shouse, 2018). Thus, veteran teachers tend to talk more than novice teachers and offer advice, whereas novice teachers tend to ask more questions (Horn, 2010; Spilane et al., 2018). Accordingly, veteran teachers often serve as mentors for novice teachers, who take on the role of apprentice. Such apprenticeship may facilitate novice teachers' development of *professional vision* (Goodwin, 1994) through the construction of "the objects of knowledge that become the insignia of a profession's craft: the theories, artifacts, and bodies of expertise that distinguish it from other professions" (p. 606). Professional vision is developed through three discourse practices facilitated by veteran teachers: (1) *coding*—identifying objects and phenomena by their professional names (e.g., viewing and identifying teaching practices while observing a lesson); (2) *highlighting* specific phenomena in a complex perceptual field (e.g., focusing the gaze on a problematic student); and (3) *producing and articulating material representations* of phenomena, which represent an understanding of those phenomena (e.g., producing a lesson plan that integrates the problematic student in the lesson).

Face threat and face-work in veteran and novice teachers' dynamics

Developing a reflective inquiry stance among teachers is no easy task. Studies indicate that hierarchal power relations and status differences impede collaborative inquiry (Liu, 2013), and that teachers avoid moving from a polite to critical inquiry stance, particularly in the presence of seniority gaps (Hargreaves, 1991; John, 2006). According to Goffman's (1955) concept of face, this difficulty may be conceptualized as the challenge of threatening and preserving teachers' face. Goffman contends that every person in a social interaction adopts a *line,* which is "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (p. 5). For instance, a veteran teacher in a learning community meeting might adopt the line of an expert who has much to contribute but little to learn (Vedder-Weiss et al., 2019). *Face* is the positive social value that a person claims for herself in light of the line that others perceive she is taking. Gaps between the recognition that a person receives and the line she presents pose a *threat* to her face. Thus, for example, if colleagues reject the veteran teacher's advice, they deviate from the line she presents and thereby threaten her face. To preserve face and minimize face loss, people engage in *face-work,* defined by Goffman (1955) as "[t]he actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face" (p. 12). Participants in an interaction make a joint effort to preserve their own and each other's face, which may contrast with the openness to criticism that reflective inquiry demands.

Teacher collaborative planning

Another factor that may influence teachers' reflective inquiry and veteran-novice dynamics is the framing of the teachers' discussions. Collaboratively examining teaching practices (represented, for example, by classroom videos) entails personal exposure and might therefore be highly threatening. In contrast, early instructional planning phases, such as discussing mathematical problems and reading professional literature, may be less threatening (Crespo, 2006; Koellner, 2007) and may better support reflective inquiry. Furthermore, the rapid pace of classroom events and immediacy with which teachers must respond make collaborative lesson planning

(including envisioning how the lesson will unfold and preparing a range of responses to future events) extremely valuable for developing adaptive expertise (Kennedy, 2006; Yinger, 1980).

Studies indicate that veteran and novice teachers differ in how they engage in planning. Veteran teachers plan more effectively (Housner & Griffey, 1985) and more adaptively (Clark & Lampert, 1986) than novices. Veterans tend towards general long-term planning, whereas novices plan small details for short-term lessons (John, 2006). In order to expose novice teachers to veterans' more complex planning process, scholars as well as practitioners recommend that as part of their initiation, novice teachers co-plan with veteran teachers (John, 2006). However, the concept of initiation frames learning as a one-way process: the veteran is expected to teach the novice, who is expected to learn (Sutton & Shouse, 2018). This raises questions of whether this model supports reflective inquiry for all participants and whether veteran teachers can also learn in a collaborative mixed-seniority planning session.

Research objectives

To explore the dynamics between veteran and novice teachers in a collaborative planning session, we examine in this case-study the following research questions:

1. How are teachers positioned and what roles do they play throughout the collaborative planning process?
2. How does the framing of a planning session shape the dynamics of veteran-novice teachers and their engagement in face-work?
3. How does the interaction between novice and veteran teachers in a planning session facilitate reflective inquiry?

Methods

Research context, data collection, and case selection

This study focuses on a group of three Israeli elementary school science teachers engaged in a planning session as part of a regional ongoing professional development (PD) program. Thirty science teachers, teaching grades 3-9, participated in this program, creating a regional learning community whose meetings were designed and facilitated collaboratively by two district science coaches, leading teachers from the community, and two researchers from our research team. The PD was designed to support reflective inquiry into practice through learning cycles that include: learning a topic; planning an instructional unit; implementing the unit in class; and sharing a documentation of the implementation with the community for collaborative reflective inquiry. During the year of data collection, the community engaged in three learning cycles focused on: (1) literacy; (2) diversifying instructional methods; and (3) student motivation. The researchers participated-observed all ten community meetings, each three hours in length, video-recorded and/or audio-recorded the meetings, collected artifacts, and took field notes.

The third community meeting initiated the second learning cycle and included a plenary discussion about the advantages and challenges of diversifying instructional methods, followed by a planning session. Teachers were divided into groups and asked to plan an instructional unit on the topic of electricity, each using a different instructional method assigned to them by the coaches. Lesson plans were to be shared with all community members. In each group, at least one member was required to implement the unit in her classroom, record it, and share a segment of the recording with the community at the subsequent meeting.

The group at the center of this case-study (Burawoy, 1998) consisted of three teachers from three different schools: Rachel (pseudonym, as are all names in this proposal; 24 years of teaching experience), Yaara (10 years of teaching experience), and Shira (first year of teaching). The researcher, Dana, joined the group and audio-recorded its conversation (in addition to the video camera that recorded the entire session). This particular group was assigned inquiry teaching as their instructional method. They began by negotiating who would implement and record the unit. Despite her initial objections, Shira was eventually chosen for the task. The group decided to plan a unit based on constructing an electrical cycle in which a lemon serves as the power source. We were drawn to this group's session because of our impression that the teachers were particularly engaged in collaborative reflective inquiry (for 78 minutes straight); we sought to explore whether this impression was accurate and why and how seniority dynamics were involved. This case is therefore an illuminating "information-rich case that manifests the phenomenon of interest intensely" (Patton, 2002, p. 234).

Analysis

This case-study applies the principles and concepts of linguistic ethnography (Rampton et al., 2015), combining the openness and holistic perspective of sociocultural contexts with the systematic and rigorous analysis of linguistics. The audio-recording of the focal group's discussion provided discourse data for our analysis, complemented by the video-recording of the entire session, which afforded multimodal analysis (Streeck et al., 2011). To address the first research question, we carefully examined the discourse data to identify moments of self- and mutual-positioning. We then brainstormed about what was going on at each moment and why. We used microanalysis to examine how each utterance was afforded by previous utterances, what speakers' lexical, tonal, and grammatical choices reflect, what else could have happened but did not, and why. This allowed us to better understand how the positioning had unfolded, how the framing of the planning session was involved in teachers' face-work, and the implications for teachers' reflective inquiry in terms of expressions of reflective thinking, multiple perspectives, pedagogical reasoning, and connecting between teaching, learning, and subject-matter.

Key findings

The analysis reveals how collaborative planning afforded reflective inquiry for both veteran and novice teachers. We present our findings organized around three intertwined dimensions that correspond, respectively, with our three research questions.

Mentoring relationship in a planning session

After agreeing that Shira would teach the lesson they were planning, the three teachers mutually constructed their relationship as mentoring, whereby the veteran teachers, Rachel and Yaara, played the role of expert mentors while Shira was positioned as a mentee being inducted into the science teaching community of practice. This co-construction unfolded in several ways:

Discussing disciplinary content knowledge: The mentoring relationship was shaped by the discussion of disciplinary content knowledge. Shira asked disciplinary questions, to which the veteran teachers responded, addressing Shira as though she were their student. For example, when Shira asked how the lemon would be connected to the electrical circuit and referred to the clasps as "those pluses," Rachel introduced the appropriate disciplinary term (which Shira was likely already familiar with): "The pluses are called alligators," verifying whether Shira understood by asking, "Okay?" Rachel instructed Shira on how to connect the lemon to the circuit, demonstrating the procedure using a paper cup: "I'll say it again. That's the lemon? You take the electricity, the electrical wire, just stick it in." Here, Rachel used didactic language, reminding that she had just said the same thing a few minutes earlier ("I'll say it again"). The three teachers were leaning over and gazing at the paper cup, sharing a public focus of attention and action (Goodwin, 1994) directed at mentoring Shira. Shira accepted her positioning as a mentee by, for example, confirming that she now understands: "Ah! I get it!"

Discussing pedagogical content knowledge: The construction of the mentoring relationship also emerged through the discussion of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). For example, Yaara scripted for Shira a series of questions that she could ask her students prior to conducting the experiment: "Open it as a question [to the students]: How do you answer such a question? What kind of a question is this? A question with answers in the textbook?" When Rachel disagreed with Yaara's suggested script, Shira asked that they slow down so that she could write everything down: "Let's write it all down from the beginning so I can tell them everything in a structured way." In so doing, she acknowledged the mentoring process and signified that the disagreement between the two veterans left her somewhat confused.

Identifying the implementing teacher: The distinct positioning of veterans versus novice was also shaped by the identification of who would be teaching the lesson. When there was no deliberation about the plan, the veteran teachers talked *to* Shira, directly addressing her (e.g., "you can…"), as part of her initiation process and preparation for teaching the lesson. However, when the veteran teachers disagreed about the plan, the lesson reverted to the lesson they themselves would teach, and they experimented and rehearsed it (Horn, 2010) with each other. They "returned" the lesson to Shira only when it had been edited and was ready for implementation. For example, Rachel addressed Shira as the teacher who would teach the lesson, formulating questions for her to ask her class, animating (Goffman, 1983) her voice: "You ask them, 'Can I generate electricity using a lemon?' Okay?" However, when Yaara challenged Rachel's thinking, Yaara took over the role of the experimenting teacher, "I wouldn't tell them [that a lemon can generate electricity]"; and Rachel aligned, "No, I don't want to tell them." In that moment, Shira became a bystander in the professional brainstorming between the two experts discussing their teaching and was positioned as their mentee.

Developing professional vision: The mentoring relationship was also established through the unidirectional professional vision development. Towards the end of the session, Shira sought a better understanding of the course of the experiment:

1036	Shira	If the lemon is part of the electrical circuit, then how, in fact,
1037		are they going to put it into the circuit? You see? Why do I ask?,
1038		Because you have the battery
1039	Rachel	I'll draw it for you. Do you have a piece of paper?
1040	Shira	No. There's the battery, there's the wires that lead from the battery.
1041	Rachel	Here, look, look. This is what it should look like. I'll demonstrate it
1042		for you to see. An electrical wire is stuck into the battery.
1043		Another electrical wire is stuck into the battery connecting to XXX

Shira's questions elicited Rachel's elaborated explanation, using a drawing to illustrate the circuit graphically. In Goodwin's (1994) terms, Rachel taught Shira the bodies of knowledge that are "the unique hallmark of professional craft" (p. 606). Rachel facilitated the development of Shira's professional vision by: (1) pointing to a body of knowledge (graphically demonstrating a circuit) applying the profession's discourse; (2) highlighting certain elements of the electrical circuit ("Here, look, look," line 1041); and (3) producing a tangible representation with an eloquent explanation of the electrical circuit. All of this effort took place despite Shira's feeble protest, "No" (line 1040), in a way that positioned Shira as a learner whose control of the mentoring process is limited.

Reduced face threats within the mentoring relationship in a planning session

As part of the co-construction of the mentoring relationship, the veteran teachers exhibited mostly a line of experts, while the novice presented a line of *learner*. However, all three participants moderated the line they presented, and therefore reduced face threats and face-work. For example, Rachel presented an *expert teacher* line: she deliberated how to formulate the opening question of the activity in a way that would best motivate student learning. She demonstrated great confidence in her planning, thereby aligning with her line of an expert veteran, typing the lesson plan without consulting her peers, but reading aloud, allowing them to express their opinions: "So now I say, I start with the question [typing], 'Do you think you can produce electricity using a lemon?'" However, Rachel also moderated the line of expert by deliberating aloud two options: "Or I can say something else: 'How do you think you can produce electricity by [using lemon]?'" Then she stopped typing and countered her own suggestion: "But then I am sort of telling them." The more rigid the line the speaker presents, the stronger threat posed to face by a deviation from that line (Goffman, 1955); therefore, because Rachel moderated her line to *deliberating expert* her face became less vulnerable to threat.

We suggest that the moderation of the teachers' lines was afforded by the framing of the session as a planning activity. The focus of planning is future practice; hence, teachers do not need to retroactively examine action or practice and expose themselves to judgment and criticism. Planning is, in a sense, a hypothetical debate in which uncertainty and doubt are considerably legitimate and pose minimal risk to teachers' face. In addition, Rachel's own deliberation, within the context of a mentoring relationship in a planning session, may also have supported her line as Shira's mentor. Examining various options and citing their disadvantages modeled for Shira how an experienced teacher exercises judgment and professionally explores alternatives of practice.

As part of positioning herself as a mentee, Shira presented a line of learner, which allowed her to demonstrate a lack of knowledge without risk to her face. Thus, Shira could dare to ask naive questions and seek advice. For example, after she offered a counterproposal to Rachel's suggestions and was criticized by her colleagues, rather than defending her ideas, she simply asked, "Why?" and "So what should be done?"

Reflective inquiry afforded by reduced face threats within mentoring relationships in a planning session

The framework of a planning session reduced the threat to the teachers' face within the mentoring relationship. This enabled reflective inquiry and learning for the novice and veteran teachers, manifested in reflective thinking, multiple perspectives, pedagogical reasoning, and connections between teaching, learning, and content.

Reflective thinking: As shown above, the moderation of Rachel's line was accompanied by reflective, explicit, and verbalized thinking, which afforded the expression of uncertainty, doubt, and even error and hence deepened the reflective discourse and teachers' learning. For example, when Rachel reached a point of doubt in her planning, she lifted her hands from the keyboard and switched to speech alone, sharing her reflective deliberation: "But then I'm sort of telling [the answer to the students]." By making her thoughts explicit, she made them accessible for the other teachers' learning and not just her own. Thus, the moderation of Rachel's expert line made it possible for her colleagues to intervene and participate in her reflective thinking process. They criticized

her suggestions ("I would say [to the students] something else"), and suggested alternative ideas (asking the students to "offer a way to measure") using disciplinary terminology ("Add the word 'prove'").

The teachers cut into each other's speech while thinking aloud, struggling to articulate their thoughts in words. We suggest that this collaborative reflective process (and others in the session) was afforded by the need to translate vague thoughts into explicit and clear written text—i.e., a lesson plan.

Multiple perspectives: In a planning session, teaching has not yet taken place. Hence, multiple points of view and suggestions are legitimate and may be equally correct and thus less threatening to participants' face. This expands participation opportunities for both novices and veterans. Returning to the example above, Shira's bids for the floor were unsuccessful until her third attempt, when she touched Yaara's hand and said, "Listen," suggesting, "once we have neatly written on the board all the generalizations [of the groups of circuit components], I would present the lemon [to the students] and ask them, 'Where would you insert it?'" Shira's proposal was criticized by her peers, resulting in a disagreement between them. However, as we showed above, this did not appear to threaten Shira's face. Quite the contrary: it is possible that the disagreement boosted Shira, as her proposal was seriously considered in a deliberation that entailed hypotheses about required prior knowledge and students' answers and was rich with pedagogical reasoning and hypothetical situations in class—all resulting from her suggestion.

Pedagogical reasoning: Throughout the session, the teachers' planning was exceptionally rich with pedagogical reasoning. We relate this richness to the goal of designing the best lesson plan (whether because the plan was to be distributed to all of the program's participants, or to mentor Shira, or even to impress the researcher, Yael). This was apparent, for example, when Shira challenged the group's thinking by insisting on providing students with a better explanation of the role of the lemon: "Like, why? I want to give [the students] some background, like, why specifically a lemon, why did I choose to bring a lemon, see what I mean? 'It's known that', for example ,'a lemon has such and such and therefore I brought it to class so let's see'. Rachel didn't agree with Shira: "But I want there to be an investigation. So, like, the investigation must also be afterwards. The investigation will also be in the part about what's the connection of a lemon to a power source. How is it related to a battery? Like, I have an inquiry on top of an inquiry here. Inquiry of experimenting and also inquiry of finding information. That's, like, how I think."

Both Shira and Rachel explained their opposing stances regarding students' understanding. Shira formulated a methodology of causality: First, she would explain the lemon's features: "It's known that, for example, a lemon has such and such" (lines 515-516). Only afterwards would she conduct the experiment: "So let's see" (line 516). Rachel proposed the opposite approach, namely, to refrain from giving background information on the lemon before students began experimenting on their own. She explained her reasoning as presenting students with an additional challenge: "An inquiry on top of an inquiry" (line 520).

Rachel did not only share her reasoning with Shira, but also gained access to Yaara's reasoning, resulting in changing Rachel's mind. For example, in the abovementioned disagreement between Rachel and Yaara, Rachel eventually agreed that she "doesn't want to tell them" that a lemon can generate electricity.

Connecting between teaching, learning, and subject matter: The planning discussion was rich in connections between teachers' actions, students' understanding, and disciplinary content and skills. For example, when the group discussed how to incorporate an ammeter into the electrical circuit, Yaara and Rachel connected children's understanding of the disciplinary content to instructional practices:

Rachel stressed that children come to a science lesson with ideas that are shaped by past experiences, such as the notion of a lightbulb as a consumer in an electrical circuit: "But children remember from third grade when they built an electrical circuit. What did they build? They took a battery, electrical wires, and a buzzer or lightbulb, right?" This afforded an episode rich in hypotheses that were marked by words like "might" and "may" "You see? They [students] want a consumer… They may not treat the ammeter like a consumer. Now in the previous lesson, [Shira] can also say that an ammeter in an electrical circuit functions like any other consumer." These hypotheses connected between disciplinary content the teachers wished to teach (an ammeter as a consumer in an electrical circuit), students' understanding of this content (considering only lightbulbs or buzzers as consumers), and additional instructional practices the teachers needed to consider (introducing an ammeter as a consumer in the previous lesson). Making such connections explicit and applying them to future practice afforded learning for all participating teachers.

Conclusions

The analysis of this case-study of veteran and novice teachers' collaborative planning highlights three intertwined dimensions that shaped teacher learning. First, seniority gaps enabled co-construction of mentoring relationships. These relationships were supported by the context of collaborative planning of a lesson for the novice teacher to teach her class. The conversation constantly entailed two levels of teaching that supported the mentoring

dynamics: Shira's planned teaching of the lesson and teaching Shira to teach the lesson. The positioning of Shira as mentee was co-constructed in the interaction: Shira positioned herself as mentee, for example, by asking the veteran teachers disciplinary and pedagogical questions. The veteran teachers positioned Shira as mentee in their efforts to facilitate and develop her professional vision (Goodwin, 1994).

Second, the analysis suggests that mentoring relationships in the context of collaborative planning may reduce face threat and, accordingly, face-work. Planning future practice may be less threatening to teachers' face than reflectively inquiring into past practices because the exposure in planning is relatively limited. At the planning stage, teachers expose themselves to criticism only in sharing their ideas. Varied and mutually challenged ideas are even crucial for creating a quality lesson plan. Therefore, challenging and criticizing each other's ideas may be perceived not as a personal threat but as a contribution to the group's planning effort. Criticizing an idea even elevates its status, by making it an idea worth exploring. There may be additional reasons for the limited face-work in this case. Shira's positioning as a learner meant she could ask any question and freely express doubts and uncertainties without deviating from her line. In addition, the inherent dimension of uncertainty in planning allowed more room for a multiplicity of voices and doubts (Yinger, 1980) as well as for the adoption of a deliberating expert line by the veteran teachers, a line that is less vulnerable to face threats.

Third, the analysis indicates that the line of deliberating expert taken by the veteran teachers while mentoring the novice teacher in planning a lesson afforded reflective inquiry discourse. The planning discourse was characterized by explicit reflective thinking, multiple perspectives, pedagogical reasoning, and connecting teaching, learning, and the subject-matter. Teachers' thinking is not easily accessible to colleagues, particularly because of professional norms, such as privatism and isolation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Little, 1990). Hence, collaborative reflective inquiry in planning may offer unique opportunities for teachers to share their pedagogical thinking (Clark & Yinger, 1979), making it an important learning arena for both novice and veteran teachers.

Implications and contribution

Scholars advocate teacher learning through collaborative reflective inquiry into their practice (e.g. Horn & Kane, 2015). Research often emphasizes the affordances of collaboratively scrutinizing representations of classroom practice (e.g., classroom videos), along with the challenges of creating the conditions that will allow teachers to open their classroom doors and contend with the exposure this entails (e.g. Vedder-Weiss et al., 2019; Hargreaves, 1991; Keollner, 2007; Little, 1990). This case-study demonstrates that collaborative planning may facilitate collaborative reflective inquiry into practice. It suggests that collaborative planning may be one way to share practice with colleagues and overcome the challenges involved in exposing classroom practice. Thus, the case-study highlights the benefits of collaborative planning not only for developing better lesson plans but also as a rich context for teacher learning. Further research could compare planning sessions with other types of collaborative inquiry sessions, such as video analysis, to further explore the relative advantages and shortcomings of planning, in terms of, for example, face threats and face-work.

Certainly not all collaborative planning supports teacher learning. Teachers can engage in planning in a technical manner, discussing mostly pacing and logistics (Horn et al., 2017). Furthermore, hierarchical power relations, stemming from status and seniority gaps between teachers, may impede inquiry and learning (Liu, 2013; Sutton & Shouse, 2018). Shedding light on veteran and novice teacher dynamics, this case-study suggests that collaborative planning may, in fact, serve as an arena of learning for both novices and veterans, especially when their relationship is mutually constructed as mentoring. This framing of the relationship in the planning context appears to enable teachers to adopt lines (such as learner or deliberative expert) that reduce their exposure to face threats, relative to lines such as expert model teacher (Vedder-Weiss et al., 2019). Thus, the case-study contributes to the understanding of face-work in veteran-novice dynamics in collaborative professional learning. The findings suggest collaborative planning as a way to respond to the challenges of the hierarchical dynamics of veteran and novice participation in reflective inquiry into practice.

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