

Teaching Lesson Planning in Family and Consumer Sciences

Bette Montgomery
Northern Illinois University

Family and consumer sciences (FCS) teacher educators need to be able to teach the lesson planning process to pre-service teachers. Learning the lesson planning process is important to the professional development of FCS pre-service teachers. The process of teaching lesson planning, however, is challenging. Following a literature review, the author provides an example of teaching lesson planning in FCS education.

We need to understand the process of teaching lesson planning in FCS education as it is central to teaching. However, teaching pre-service teachers the process of lesson planning is difficult (Curran, 2016; Martin, 1990). In teaching about lesson planning we need to keep in mind the development of the pre-service teacher regarding the planning process (including planning-based concepts as well as FCS subject matter concepts) (Shulman, 1986; 1987). Emphasis on the process of writing is one way in which to facilitate lesson planning. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of literature as well as share an example of teaching the lesson planning process.

Literature Review

Over the past several decades, considerable discussion occurred regarding the focus of FCS including middle and high school level FCS education (Brown, 1978; Brown & Paolucci, 1979; Johnson & Fedje, 1999; McGregor, 2003; NASAFACTS, 2017; Redick et al., 1998). Simultaneously, teacher responsibilities and competencies have been further defined (Danielson, 1996; Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation, 2013). Considering such changes, the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* were developed (Erickson, Fox, & Stewart, 2010). The “curriculum development” standard states that FCS teachers should be able to “develop, justify, and implement curricula” (Erickson, Fox, & Stewart, 2010, p.1). An important competency, therefore, is the ability to develop curriculum, and more specifically, lesson plans.

Lesson Planning

The importance of teaching planning for beginning FCS teachers has been examined by FCS education researchers. Nichols and Mundt (1996) ranked instruction as one of the most critical teacher responsibilities for beginning teachers. Yahnke and Love (1997) found that both FCS teachers and teacher educators identified planning for instruction as one of the key competencies needed for beginning FCS teachers. Davis (2010), in a study of teacher educators’ program priorities, also found that “teaching methods, curriculum and resources” ranked highly. Davis (2010) also found that written lesson and unit planning (based on the national standards for FCS middle and high school level students) was of lower priority. Teaching about instructional or lesson planning is generally viewed as important.

The purpose and nature of the lesson plan varies among individuals. For beginning teachers, the purpose of the lesson plan ranges from that of a written lesson plan that must be followed to that of a memory aide to guide teaching (Kagan & Tippins, 1992). Martin (1990) noted that beginning teachers perceive instructional planning skills more useful than experienced teachers. For experienced teachers, the purpose of the lesson plan is to organize events or procedures to follow in the classroom (Shimmel & Columbia, 2016). From both perspectives, lesson planning is focused on what happens during classroom instruction. Teacher educators may also have an additional purpose, that is, to engage the pre-service teacher in the lesson planning process.

The components included in the lesson plan vary as well across subject matter areas. Smith (2012) stated that for the beginning teacher lesson plans generally include the “introduction to the lesson, review of previous lesson, presentation of new content, application of new information, assessing new learning and closure” (p. 10). Shimmel and Columbia (2016) found that for experienced teachers the “essential elements of a lesson plan are objectives, questions to ask, materials, and warm-up explanation” (p. 518). It is suggested that a list of procedures and processes to guide classroom instruction is needed rather than detailed written plans. Detailed plans which are strictly adhered to by the teacher may prevent improvisation or the flexibility needed in teaching practice (Livingston & Borko, 1989; Shimmel & Columbia; 2016).

The pre-service teacher thinks about planning differently than experienced teachers. Among FCS teachers, Martin (1990) determined that “beginning teachers gave more serious consideration to conceptualizing objectives, content, learning experiences, organizing lesson plans, and specific details” (p. 36). Martin further noted that experienced teachers are more likely to use routines and habits within planning that beginning teachers have not yet developed. This idea is supported by other researchers. Experienced or expert teachers have developed schemata or mental scripts from which they can draw upon to effectively and efficiently develop subsequent lessons (Livingston & Borko, 1989; Stender, Brückmann, & Neumann, 2017). In contrast, beginning or novice teachers need to simultaneously develop or modify their mental scripts of teaching while planning a lesson. As a result, beginning teachers may be more focused on the details of the instructional plan but are less efficient in their planning process (Livingston & Borko, 1989; Stender, Brückmann, & Neumann, 2017).

Writing and Lesson Planning

Writing lesson plans can be time consuming but important to the development of pre-service teachers’ understanding of the planning process. Writing is about communicating the meaning of ideas and is, therefore, essential to lesson planning, both in understanding the process itself, as well as how to communicate ideas (Montgomery, 2008; Smith & Morgan, 1986; Vermont Writing Collaborative, 2016, Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). In general, writing is developed through the phases of pre-writing, writing, and post-writing (Sharp, 2016); this process can be applied to lesson planning as well. There is not, however, one set of defined strategies to teach the process of writing (Council for Writing Program Administrators, et al., 2011; Sharp, 2016). Simultaneously, there is also not one set of strategies to teach the process of writing lesson plans.

The idea of connecting lesson planning and writing is not new. Holcombe and Fedje (1983) developed a framework for teaching lesson planning paired with the writing process (see Figure 1). In their framework a teaching and learning plan (TLP) is developed. This framework

includes the following four phases: (1) development of a concept, (2) structuring the plan, (3) designing teaching and learning, and (4) reviewing peers TLPs. Within each of these phases, strategies are incorporated to develop pre-service teachers' understanding of both the planning process and FCS concepts.

Figure 1: Phases of the Teaching and Learning Plan Process and Strategies

(Holcombe & Fedje, 1983)

Planning Process Phase	Strategies
1. Developing a Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selecting a concept from the program or unit plan. ● Concept analysis (definition, attributes, non-attributes, examples, non-examples).
2. Structuring the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of key questions – Expanding on the idea of the concept and identifying the key ideas which impact on and are part of the concept. ● Development of a concept outline ● Identification of possible teaching methods or strategies
3. Designing Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of the written plan which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation set: Experiences which set the stage for learning. - Learning Experiences - Learning Experience Questions - Review Closure: Questions, conclusions or summaries - Transition Set: Link between consecutive activities - Transfer Closure: Connection of the concept to one's life. - Evaluation
4. Reviewing Peers TLPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage in periodic peer review of plans at different stages of the developmental process.

Multiple strategies may be used by teacher educators to teach lesson planning. Drost and Levine (2015) conducted research on the methods used to teach lesson planning to pre-service teachers, specifically regarding the alignment of content standards. In this study, Drost and Levine found three primary methods were used by teacher educators: expository instruction (e.g. lecture, video), collaborative instruction (e.g., discussion, joint-writing, peer review) and hands-on instruction (e.g. develop lesson and unit plans, interview teachers). Hands-on instruction was the most prevalent method used (Drost & Levine, 2015). In FCS, strategies for curriculum development have also been identified. Montgomery (2008) proposed curriculum development strategies such as the examination of the perennial problem, development of a rationale and key questions, and the identification of broad concepts. Smith (2012) discussed FCS program development from technical (scientific) and non-technical (problem-based) curriculum orientations.

Summary

There is limited literature about teaching the lesson planning process in FCS education, however, educational literature more broadly can help to inform us about teaching this process. Teaching about lesson planning is challenging but important to the development of pre-service teachers. Sharing examples about teaching lesson planning may help current and future FCS teacher educators learn about best practices.

One Example of Teaching the Lesson Planning Process

When I first became a teacher educator I struggled to teach the lesson planning process. I understood the components of planning, but not how to teach it well to pre-service teachers. I needed to determine ways in which I could better communicate the planning process. The following ideas have been developed over the course of my career based on my philosophy and practice.

Lesson Planning as a Script

Lesson planning is a developmental process which includes pre-planning, planning and post-planning phases that occur within and across FCS education coursework (see Figure 2). The components are based on Holcombe and Fedje's TLP framework (1983) as well as Hunter's lesson design elements (Burden & Byrd, 2007). Writing is incorporated into all planning phases. But the lesson plan itself begins as a written script. Dr. Julie Johnson, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, shared that she found a more detailed written or scripted lesson plan to be of benefit for the pre-service teacher when they were implementing instruction. I incorporated this idea into my own practice. I believe a script helps pre-service teachers envision what the lesson will look like when implemented in the FCS classroom. The emphasis of the script is to write about what the teacher and student will do and say. This is based on Holcombe and Fedje's (1983) emphasis on addressing both teaching and learning within the lesson plan. In subsequent FCS education courses, the lesson planning process is revisited.

Over time, however, pre-service teachers are directed to write the lesson plan in bulleted phrases/ideas. This is more consistent with how experienced teachers plan as described by Shimmel and Columbia (2016). The underlying premise is not to just reduce the amount of writing but that the pre-service teacher has more fully developed their understanding of lesson planning as well as FCS subject matter content. Pre-service teachers are encouraged to "write more when needed" if they are not as familiar with a concept or activity procedures.

Concrete to Complex Planning Concepts

One teaching and learning principle that has guided my practice is to begin with concrete concepts and move toward more complex concepts (e.g., Smith & Morgan, 1986). Throughout the FCS education courses, pre-service teachers are introduced to increasing more complex planning components. For example, in the pre-planning phase, general questions are focused on the educational context. In subsequent FCS education courses, the educational context is researched and described in a written paper.

An additional example of this principle occurs in the planning phase. During the initial FCS education course, overarching planning components are developed (e.g., concept, rationale, student objectives) which cover the scope of the plan. I refer to this an umbrella plan because this metaphor helped me to better communicate these planning components. In subsequent coursework, a unit umbrella plan is developed, which covers the scope of the unit and links

lessons together. (As I talk the umbrella plan with pre-service teachers, I frequently find myself arching my arms over my head to visually represent an umbrella.)

Another example that represents this teaching and learning principle relates to assessment. In the initial FCS education course, assessment, as checks for understanding, is focused on the development of questions to which students will respond. In later coursework, checks for understanding become pre- and post-assessment strategies that are incorporated into

Figure 2: Lesson Planning Phases and Development

Phase	Initial Development	Subsequent Development: Selected Examples
Pre-Planning	<p>Pre-thinking about the lesson. Questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To whom will the lesson be taught? ● What concept will be the focus of the lesson? ● What do you know about the students? ● What activities could you use to for students to learn about this concept? 	<p>Researching and writing about the educational context (school, district, students, FCS course/program).</p>
Planning	<p>Developing the written plan.</p> <p><i>Umbrella for the Lesson</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course & Grade Level - Concept – Identification and description of specific concept - Rationale for teaching the concept - Student Objectives - FCS Standard(s) <p><i>Lesson Plan</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction - Introduction of new concept and/or brief review of previously learned ideas. 2. Goals - State the goals of the lesson in student language as related to the concept. 3. Advanced Organizer - Give an overview or preview of what is to come (agenda, concept map, outline, diagram, illustration). 4. Learning Experiences/Activities – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Purpose - Tell the purpose of the activity and the connection to the concept to be learned. (b) Teacher - Directions/guidelines for the teacher - Include the main points, examples, questions, etc. What will the teacher (you) do and say? (c) Students - Directions/guidelines for the students. What should students do and say? 5. Check for Understanding - Ask questions about the concept. 6. Conclusion/Summary - What will the teacher or students do and say? <p><i>Review and Revise</i> – Strategies such as explaining the plan and teaching to peers; self and peer review; making revisions based on feedback.</p>	<p>Developing the umbrella plan for a unit.</p> <p>Incorporation of pre- and post-assessment strategies for lesson(s) and unit.</p>
Post-Planning	<p>Reflecting and analyzing planning, teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>Planning process</i> - What did you do to prepare this lesson? What was challenging for you? If you were to teach this lesson again, what changes would you make? Why?</p> <p><i>Teaching Process</i> - From your own perspective what worked well in implementing this lesson? From the FCS teacher’s perspective? What didn’t work as well?</p> <p><i>Student Learning</i>- What do you believe students learned from this lesson? Did this match the objectives that that were planned for this lesson? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Analysis of pre- and post-assessment data.</p>

the lesson and/or unit plan. This principle is also represented in the post-planning phrase. In the initial course, pre-service teachers reflect upon the lesson. In subsequent FCS education courses, post-planning includes the collection of assessment data (from the pre- and post-assessment), analysis, and interpretation of the data. Additional attention is also given to reasoning for action, process questions and problem solving in both planning and teaching methods (NASAFACS, 2017).

The Lesson Plan Should Change Forms

The lesson plan should change depending on the pre-service teacher's level of development and teaching experiences. For instance, pre-service teachers in our program complete three semesters of FCS education courses before student teaching. Within each of these courses, pre-service teachers complete field experiences in which they develop and implement a lesson. In the initial course, a more detailed written plan is developed (e.g., the script). For implementation, however, pre-service teachers are encouraged highlight important parts. In this way the lesson plan serves more as a guide for instruction. Most often, pre-service teachers will state something like "I knew the plan so well ahead of time. I didn't need to follow the written lesson plan when I taught." In subsequent courses, students are encouraged to write the instructional component of the lesson plan as bullets but also to "write more if needed." During the student teaching semester, the lesson plan becomes more of a working plan in which there should be penciled-in revisions and comments, not a perfectly typed lesson plan.

Concerns

From my observations, for most pre-service teachers, lesson planning becomes a pattern of thinking which is developed through multiple learning experiences in the college classroom and within schools. Pre-service teachers share common concerns about lesson planning. For example, they are initially concerned about the time and investment it takes to develop and write one plan. Moving from scripts to bulleted lesson plans helps to address the amount of writing but an investment in thinking about the plan is still necessary. Or, for instance, they are concerned what they are doing is not how their cooperating teacher plans lessons. Pre-service teachers are encouraged to further discuss this difference. During student teaching, they are also encouraged explore the cooperating teacher's lesson planning process or format to better facilitate their communication.

Invitation

These are few examples of my philosophy and practice of teaching lesson planning. By sharing this I hope it will encourage other FCS teacher educators to also share their philosophy and practice experiences. By doing so, I believe we can further develop our understanding of teaching lesson planning in FCS education.

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About the Author

Bette Montgomery, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences at Northern University, DeKalb, Illinois.

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