

Abstract

Teacher planning has been conceptualized in a number of ways ranging from regarding it as a set of clearly defined steps to understanding it as the job of interpreting and managing the complexity of unique teaching contexts. Research orientations towards it and the methods applied in the different investigations have varied greatly depending on the perspective from which it has been approached. This has produced a considerable body of literature and various descriptions of planning, which the present study intends to complement by investigating how teachers of English plan their teaching in Hungary.

The main aim of this study is to explore ways of planning as it is done by teachers at Hungarian schools. It adopts a qualitative research perspective, and investigates planning on the basis of the participating teachers' views and commentaries based on the assumption that all aspects of teaching gain their meaning through the teacher's interpretation of the various teaching contexts (Freeman, 1996a). The data were collected by questionnaires and in-depth interviews in order to capture the most important features of the participating teachers' planning activity. The main findings of the research support what was previously revealed about planning on a number of points, and they also throw light on some further features. For example, they show that planning is primarily guided by teachers' intention to respond to the dual needs of groups and the individual learners in the groups, and that it has its real value in the thinking process in which teachers are engaged when they plan.

The long-term benefits of the study will be to illuminate issues of planning that trainee teachers need to be sensitized to. At the end of the study, I will, therefore, make some recommendations as to how the findings can be exploited in pre-service teacher training. I will argue that studying and interpreting the teachers' insights in the methodology seminars can help to bridge the gap between the 'theoretical training' provided by the university and the 'practical training' ensured by the schools and school-based mentors.