

Public Abstract

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Title:The Relationships among Middle Level Teachers' Assessment Practices, Instructional Leadership and Student Achievement

Purpose of the study. The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationships among teachers' assessment practices, instructional leadership, and student achievement in the middle level schools in Missouri. The method of analysis was primarily quantitative, with survey data being used to determine, (a) what is descriptive of the demographics of Missouri middle level schools, (b) what is descriptive of the assessment practices of teachers in Missouri middle level schools, (c) what is descriptive of the instructional leadership practices of the school leader, and (d) if any relationships exist between the teachers' assessment practices, the principal as instructional leader and student achievement. Supplementing the quantitative data were data obtained through written responses to open-ended questions.

Findings. The study found significant relationships among teachers' assessment practices and instructional leadership as measured through instructional improvement and curriculum improvement. One assessment practice that revealed significance was collaboration through assessment, which is the process when teachers and administrators come together and analyze assessment data to plan for instruction and discuss student achievement. Other practices were assessment during instruction, which describes the strategies that teachers employ before and during assessment, like planning for classroom discussions, providing feedback, and adjusting instruction to meet all students' needs, and the use of summative assessments, which describes the analyses of final summative data at the building level, the teacher and classroom level, and the individual student level as a basis for changes in curriculum, instructional practices and programs. A final variable, overall collective assessment practices, described teachers' perceptions of the collective ability of the faculty of their school to use assessment data to improve instruction and student achievement.

There were significant differences in middle level teachers' assessment practices for the factors and scale, Application of Formative Assessment, Providing Feedback to Students and Parents, and Use of Summative Assessments when schools were grouped according to student achievement scores on the Missouri Assessment Program. A model was developed illustrating the relationships among the instructional leadership factors and the teachers' assessment practices scales and factors. Implications for research and practice were discussed.