

Public Abstract

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Title:Analyzing How Grade 4 Teachers Plan to Teach Inquiry-Based Curriculum Materials and the Influences on Their Preparation of Mathematics Lessons

This study documented how Grade 4 teachers plan to teach from an inquiry-based mathematics curriculum, and identified specific influences on planning. Previous studies of instructional decision-making yielded a framework for researching lesson planning and informed the design of this investigation. Participants in this study were 18 teachers from four schools in three districts that adopted the Investigations in Number, Data, & Space curriculum. Qualitative analysis of interview transcripts, surveys, and lesson plans was conducted using a framework to identify primary codes for processes and influences on teachers planning.

Results indicate that collaboration influenced the content teachers planned to teach as they discussed Investigations-related issues, determined Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) to be taught, and/or exchanged activities for teaching. Whether they collaborated through district-sponsored meetings, school-level planning, or by personal choice, teachers ultimately created lesson plans individually. Although many teachers were misinformed about the requirements of No Child Left Behind, GLEs and mandatory testing programs influenced the content and sequencing of lessons and, for some, determined their curriculum. Teachers who considered Investigations to be an effective curriculum that addressed the GLEs supplemented sparingly, while those who perceived holes in the curriculum supplemented extensively. Most teachers recorded minimal information in their lesson plan due to time constraints and a limited understanding of curriculum features.

This study yielded a refined framework for researching teacher planning but additional studies are needed to validate the framework. Finally, implications are offered for (1) Accountability Awareness, (2) Understanding Educational Policy, (3) Teacher Development Programs, and (4) Professional Development.