

COMMON PLANNING TIME: A TOOL FOR BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION

by

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(Under the Direction of P. Gayle Andrews)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia used the structure of common planning time (CPT) to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. Study participants were teachers at Johnson City Middle School, a middle school in a small northeast Georgia town. The purpose of phase one, which was connected to the National Middle Grades Research Project on common planning time, sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association, was to see what interdisciplinary teams of teachers do during common planning time. Data consisted of an observation of one team meeting and an interview with the most senior member of an interdisciplinary team at each grade level (sixth, seventh, and eighth) that had one beginning teacher (in the first to third year of teaching) in the school. Phase two focused on the sixth grade team from phase one. Data consisted of observations of team and content meetings held during common planning time; and interviews with the beginning teacher, content mentor, team members, and an administrator. An inductive constant comparative method was used to analyze all data for common themes. Phase one results indicate that teachers use common planning to address student issues with interdisciplinary teams and address curriculum planning with content colleagues. Results from phase two of the study indicated that a wide variety of

teachers provided induction supports. Key induction supports included meetings with the content mentor, grade level content colleague, and interdisciplinary team; a curriculum notebook; and administrative support. Data analysis revealed that the induction supports provided had positive effects on the beginning teacher. Study participants generally believed that common planning time was a critical element in the provision of induction supports for the beginning teacher.

INDEX WORDS: Common planning time, Beginning teacher induction, Middle school, Collaborative planning, Professional development

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