

A Study of the Effect of a Change of Facilities of a Middle School Population has on Teacher Instructional Practices



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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how a change of facilities from a modern school building designed for educating middle school students, sixth through eighth grade students, to a facility that was over 50 years old and not configured to educate middle school aged children influenced teacher instructional practices. The review of the literature is related to the effect school facilities have on student measures of performance and the impact instructional methodologies have on student achievement. The investigation is a case study of the effects the change of facilities of the Blacksburg Middle School population had on selected student measures of performance and what influence the teaching staff had on the resulting improvement of student academic measures. The conflicting findings of previous research and the unique circumstances involved in the Blacksburg Middle School situation reveal the need for further research.

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Delimitations of the Study A number of delimitations relate to the study parameters: 1. The study examined the perceived benefits of one example of a mentorship program housed in an urban school division in Manitoba, Canada. 2. The study was limited to six interviews with new teachers in their first five years of teaching representing two each from elementary, middle and secondary schools, and three interviews with the divisional mentors (two current and one former) who currently coordinate or coordinated the mentor program. This change was most likely made because of the new program mandate of mentoring both new teachers and new administrators. However, school personnel have a responsibility of creating a culture of academic success for all learners. In order to change the culture of a school, Villa and Thousand (2005) postulated that new heroes, rituals, symbols, and histories must replace the current structure. Depending on the situation, this process may take a very long period of time to implement. Almost 35% of the building principals have served in the position as instructional leader for less than five years and 25% of the survey takers have worked in education between 16 and 20 years. Over 46% of the principals in this study oversee a Kindergarten through grade six facility and 51% manage a student population of 301 to 600 on a daily basis.