Classroom experiences with New Curriculum Materials During the Implementation of Performance Standards in Mathematics: A Case Study of Teachers Copping with Change

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Abstract: A qualitative case study was conducted to investigate the classroom experiences of three sixth-grade teachers and their mathematics coach as they worked with new instructional materials during the implementation of a new state-mandated curriculum based on performance standards in mathematics. Teachers’ collective participation in the exploration of the new standards, selection of materials, participation in a summer professional development workshop specifically tied to the use of the new materials, and the creation of an in-school professional development program were catalysts in the teachers’ perception of the need to change their practice. The intended state-level standards were implemented with some success; however, despite their desire to change their practice and in contrast to their belief that considerable change had occurred, the data suggest that the change in the teachers’ instructional practice was minimal.

Samuel Obara received his Ph. D. from University of Georgia in 2006. His research focuses on curriculum reform, professional development, teacher collaboration, teacher beliefs and practices and is especially interested in Spatial Reasoning of teachers and students.