

# Triangulated study of bc middle school



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Triangulated Study of Bacon County Middle School Abstract The study involves a middle school in southeastern Georgia, which identifies three collegial interactions. The three identified in the study included: study teams, coaching and mentoring.

The study involved 34% of the certified faculty at Bacon County Middle School. The randomly selected participants' years of experience ranged from: 1 participant less than 5 years; 2 participants with 5 to 10 years experience; 4 with 10 to 15 years of experience and 3 with more than 20 years. Collectively, they hold 1 doctorate degree, 5 masters degrees, and 4 specialists degrees which cover a wide range of academic fields including mathematics, language arts, special education, counseling, health and careers. Some of the works by Linn (2000), Fisher (2000) and Marzano (2002) provide insight on study teams and collegial interactions. A school's professional development plan or corrective action plan is a sure way for improving the quality and equity of teacher and student learning.

A Triangulated Study for Bacon County Middle School Introduction The strength of a triangulated study lies in its triangulation, collecting information in many ways, rather than relying solely on one source (Wolcott, 1988 as cited in Mills, 2003). Data was collected through a questionnaire, survey, and the schools professional development plan. The purpose of this study was to describe collegial interactions at Bacon County Middle School. Marzano (2003) found that collegial behavior involves teachers who are supportive of each other and openly enjoy professional interactions and are respectful of each other's needs. In particular, the study focused on professional development as a continuous process of individual and

collective examination and improvement of practice. “ Continuous learning by today’s classroom teachers is necessary for the survival and improvement of the American educational system” (Linn, 2006, para 1).

Teachers are challenged with finding the time to translate research-based strategies into classroom practices and to modify these practices for their diverse student populations (Dearman and Alber, 2005). The first study focused on study teams within the school. The second study focused on the schools professional learning and the daily work of teaching using the National Staff Development Council’s It’s Test Time Again survey. The third study used the school’s professional development plan, which shows the strengths and weaknesses. Study 1 Methodology The first study was based on research, which focused on study teams within the school. John Dewey stressed the importance of reflecting on practices and integrating observations into emerging theories of teaching and learning (Dantonio, 2001, p.

10). Bacon County Middle School shows professional development in improving the quality of teacher learning concerns by participating in study groups or study teams. Study teams within a school system can be very promising for knowledge and understanding of teacher development. Study teams prove to be an imperative part of growth professionally by keeping abreast of new teaching strategies. In research conducted by Fisher (2000) it was found that study groups provide a regular collaborative structure that enables teachers to assist one another in using the new strategy appropriately. Teacher study teams can be implemented to provide time for

teachers to collaborate about what can be done to improve student achievement.

Fisher (2000) found that study groups provide the accountability it takes to get going. Every staff member at Bacon County Middle School participates in a study group. Research indicates that teachers who work in isolation rarely change instructional practices, thereby widening the research-to practice gap (Dearman and Alber, 2005). Schools with regularly scheduled study team meetings should designate a portion of the time to look at student work reflectively (2005). Study teams, as well as coaches and mentors, provide advice, shares methods, or practices that are proven.

In relation to the writer's findings, collaboration among teachers and administration is a very vital part the school in which she works. According to research conducted by Linn (2006), it was found that teachers learn just as their students do: by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see. ResultsThe writer found that there are three major reasons study groups can be effective in schools: (A) study groups help put into practice curricular and instructional objectives, (B) collaboratively plan school improvement, and (C) study research on teaching and learning. Study teams can provide teachers with opportunities to improve their practice by sharing and discussing their reflections, knowledge, and solutions. One colleague in the cohort asked: " Do you think reflection can be considered a learning style? Or is it part of a learning style? The writer responded: " Reflection is a part of all learning styles: (A) visual learning style in that educators can review previous lessons taught to find and tweak the lesson to

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make it better for students understanding, (B) auditory learning style by sharing experiences and collaborating with others to get input and feedback on how to help improve student achievement, and (C) kinesthetic learning style in various classroom settings while students are actively engaged to reflect on the learning that is taking place.

John Dewey (1933) recognized that it is the reflection on our experiences that leads to learning-not merely the experience itself. One of the writer's cohort colleagues stated: " I agree with your view on teachers collaborating with each other can be beneficial to student learning. This can be linked to the African proverb " It Takes A Village". Working together to facilitate students learning is essential in developing minds. With teaching should be learn and teach.

Meaning once the information is process then the information needs to be delivered. How can teachers be motivated to share the wealth of information they are stocked with? The writer mentioned two ways that a teacher's wealth of information could be shared: The first way is for teachers to share websites that may be beneficial to students. The second practice of sharing information that Bacon County Middle School does is to share research-based articles. Analysis of Results Continuous learning is an important part of improving teaching practice. Teachers' collaborating with each other has proven to be beneficial to student learning at Bacon County Middle School.

Students' benefit when teachers collaborate with each other because ideas are shared on different ways to present lessons thus resulting in differentiation. Students for the most part wish to make teachers proud of

accomplishments. With the study teams among teachers and students in the advisory program students seem to take more pride in their grades when they have an adult whom they know will be checking on them every three weeks. A school culture that does not recognize that teachers, like students, are in a process of continual growth and development impedes both the development of teaching excellence and student achievement” (Dantonio 2001, p. xi).

The writer’s school could benefit from study teams. Currently, the school works in departmental groups and I am sure that I could learn from teachers in other departments. Reflection requires the ability for one to analyze and prioritize issues, to use prior knowledge as well as resource-based knowledge, and to develop a possible plan of action. Study 2

**Methodology**The second study focused on the Bacon County Middle Schools’ professional learning, how content is aligned with standards, and learning communities within the school using the National Staff Development Council’s (NSCD) It’s Test Time Again survey (see appendix A). The purpose of this study was to use a survey to examine the views of the educators at Bacon County Middle school on how well standards-based professional learning compares to their practices.

The survey was used to show the effectiveness of professional learning and the daily work of teaching in improving the quality and equity of teacher and student learning. The school consists of 33 certified teachers and administrators. Ten teachers were randomly selected to participate in the survey. “ The purpose is to generalize from a sample to a population so that

inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population” (Creswell, 2003, p.

154). Results The Its Test Time Again survey was a good indication that some time may be needed for teacher learning teams to collaborate jointly to develop lesson plans at Bacon County Middle School that will be used with all students. Overall participants were very confident that the school does a good job in: (A) professional learning, (B) staff development planning that begins with an examination of what students are expected to know and be able to do, (C) aligning with the standards their students are expected to master in addition to the state standards, (D) being a part of a learning community with regular time set aside to be used for professional learning, (E) teacher-learning teams use time together to develop lessons that will be used with all students, and (F) what students are expected to know and be able to do determine the students needs according to the results students post on classroom-based, district and state measures (see Appendix B). Teachers at Bacon County Middle school had more negative views to teacher-learning teams observing and provide feedback to other’s teaching.

Analysis of Results The data from the survey conducted at Bacon County Middle School revealed that teachers were confident that Bacon County Middle School frequently complies with Standards-Based in the area of professional standards and professional learning and the alignment with standards and teaching practices. A cohort colleague asked: “ How frequent are the professional developments at your school? Please explain your statement, “ seven percent of the teachers surveyed felt that the examination of what students are expected to know and be able to do

determine the students' needs according to the results students post on classroom-based, district and state measures? " The response to the colleague was: The writer's school frequently holds professional development sessions. The most recent professional development held was on differentiation. It lasted for two sessions and seemed to be very beneficial for the improvement of student learning. Majority of the teachers' surveyed feel that material presented to students is material, which they are expected to know on standardized tests.

The participants had positive views on the staff as a whole, daily learning time for professional learning, teacher learning teams working cooperatively and teacher learning teams jointly assessing student work. " Effective schools usually use both commonality and differentiation in curriculum, teaching, and assessment, but in doing so they exploit the advantages and guard against the abuses of each" (Newmann, 2002, p. 34). Collaboration would be a huge asset for colleagues to use common planning time to study standards that students are expected to master due to new state guidelines and the fact that students must pass the CRCT test in Georgia. Study 3  
MethodologyThe current professional development plan or corrective action plan for Bacon County Middle School is used to show the quality and equity of teacher and student learning consists within the school's corrective action plan.

A belief that the school has is focused and sustained staff development is necessary to achieve increased student achievement. Valli and Hawley (2002) stated, " One of the most persistent findings from research on school improvement is the close relation between professional development and



school improvement efforts” (p. 92). The vision of the school is to empower all children to reach their potential and to become productive citizens through a positive, challenging learning environment. The researcher found several positive attributes in the corrective action plan that promotes the equity of teacher and student learning. Results The writer found several opportunities for improvement for Bacon County Middle School which include: (A) strive to increase parental involvement, (B) efforts are needed in the use of effective classroom management and organizational strategies in each classroom, (C) continued improvement is needed in student achievement for students with disabilities (SWD), (D) decrease the percent of students absent for 15 or more days of school, and (E) close the achievement gap between white, African American, and SWD subgroups in math and reading.

Analysis of Results Liberman and Miller (2002) found that “ although professional development of teacher practice is an individual, personal learning experience, there is growing evidence that teacher learning is most powerful, long lasting, and continuous when it occurs as a result of being a member of a group of colleagues who all struggle together to plan for a given group of students” (p. 79). Within any school corrective action plan there is always a chance for weaknesses or gaps within the plan. The researcher found within the corrective action plan that the need to increase parental involvement and communication is a weakness still. However, parental involvement has increased over the last five years as a result of the school council. Professional reading materials as well as workshops have

been in place to coordinate study forums within the school as well as to coordinate vertical team studies of standards for student work.

The corrective action plan has improved the attendance rate of students missing 15 or more days by providing incentives to students who miss five or less days. Conclusion The triangulated study for Bacon County Middle School (BCMS) indicates the school's professional development in improving the quality and equity of teacher and student learning is effective. Study teams among teachers at BCMS prove to be an imperative part of growth professionally by keeping abreast of new teaching strategies. Little (2002) noted, " Professionals are more likely to collaborate when they have a problem that can't be solved, a goal that can't be achieved, or an interest that can't be satisfied by individuals working on their own" (p. 47).

BCMS does a good job in: (A) participating in professional learning activities such as book studies and research-based article findings, (B) aligning standards their students are expected to master in addition to the state standards, (C) being a part of a learning community with regular time set aside to be used for professional learning, and (D) preparing students needs according to the results on classroom-based, district and state measures. There is still a need for parental involvement. The writer would like to research more positive ways to increase parental involvement within her school. References Creswell, J. W.

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(pp. 86-96). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. Appendix A It's Test Time Again This assessment is used to measure how well practice is aligning with the vision of Bacon County Middle School. Questions will be given in the areas of results-driven, standards-based, and job embedded.

Please read each of the questions below and circle the one best answer. Use the scale below to answer each of the following questions. 5 – Always 4 – Frequently 3 – Sometimes 2 – Rarely 1 – Never Results-Driven To what degree does staff development planning begin with an examination of what students are expected to know and be able to do? 5 4 3 2 1 To what degree does the

examination of what students are expected to know and be able to do turn to a determination of student needs according to the results students post on classroom-based, district, and state measures? 5432 1 To what degree does teachers at Bacon County Middle school then search for and identify the actual teaching knowledge and skills associated with successfully teaching the content the students have yet to master? 5432 1 To what degree is teacher learning focused on this set of knowledge and skills? 5432 1 Please read each of the questions below and circle the one best answer. Use the scale below to answer each of the following questions. 5 - Always 4 - Frequently 3 - Sometimes 2 - Rarely 1 - Never Standards-Based To what degree is the content addressed through professional learning aligned with the standards your students are expected to master? 5432 1 To what degree are the content and skills addressed through professional learning aligned with the teaching standards adopted by your district, state, or National Board for Professional Teaching Standards? 5432 1 To what degree is the content and process for principal learning aligned with the standards adopted by your district, state, or the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)? 5432 1 To what degree are the context, process, and content of your professional learning aligned with your district, state, or NSDC Standards for Staff Development? 432 1 Please read each of the questions below and circle the one best answer.

Use the scale below to answer each of the following questions. 5 - Always 4 - Frequently 3 - Sometimes 2 - Rarely 1 - Never Job-Embedded To what degree does the entire BCMS staff view itself as a learning community with regular time set aside and used for professional learning? 5432 1 To what degree are

teachers members of consistent learning times that have almost daily time for professional learning? 5432 1 To what degree do the teacher learning teams use their time to study the standards their students will be expected to master? 5432 1 To what degree do the teacher learning teams use their time to jointly develop lessons that will be used with all students represented by the team? 5432 1 To what degree do the teacher learning teams use their time to develop, pilot, and implement classroom-based assessments? 5432 1 To what degree do the teacher learning teams use their time to jointly assess student work? 5432 1 To what degree do the teacher learning teams observe and provide feedback on each other's teaching? 5432 1 To what degree do the teachers feel joint responsibility for the success and failure of all students serviced by the team? 5432 1