

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS BUILDING TOWARDS STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

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Administrators, educators, and stakeholders have faced the dilemma of determining the most effective type of data for informing instruction for quite some time (Pella, 2015). While the type of standardized assessment a teacher gives during instruction is often set at the district or state level, teachers often have autonomy in the formative and summative assessments that serve as the day-to-day tools in assessing a student's progress (Abrams et al., 2016). Choices about in-class assessment and instruction are building blocks towards a student's success on standardized assessments. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to explore how 4th-8th grade math teachers' preparation and instructional practices are influenced by the types of assessments administered to their students in one school. Research questions are as follows: (a) How do 4th-8th grade math teachers describe the math assessments they use? (b) How do 4th-8th grade math teachers adjust their instructional practices as a result of their students completing formative, summative, and standardized math assessments?

Five rural 4th-8th grade teachers are participants in this case study and took part in a 20-minute semi-structured interview via Zoom that was transcribed verbatim. Two of the researchers conducted open and axial coding to determine emerging themes and consolidated the themes into categories (Saldaña, 2015). The researchers worked to address the four tenets of trustworthiness according to Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Findings showed teachers shared a progression of the ways they described their mathematics assessments. Formative math assessments were described as influencing moment to moment and day-to-day instruction, and the success of students was a clear indication on the difficulty of content and delivery by the teacher. As teachers described summative math assessments, they shared how they viewed these as more of a balance in the success of their students between instruction and student preparedness. Finally, standardized assessments were described as guiding a teacher's planning by addressing standards but not considered in their day to day activities. Two teachers mentioned how it was important for students to have a "blank slate" coming into their classes because each year is different.

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