

Developing Middle School and High School Teachers' Understanding of Inquiry Based Instruction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of professional development experiences that were designed to increase middle school and high school teachers' understanding of the nature of inquiry-based instruction. Pre-test and posttest coded responses on an open-ended survey that is based on the essential features of classroom inquiry as defined by the National Research Council (2000) were used to characterize changes in graduate student understanding. The findings indicate that three of the eight students broadened their understanding of inquiry to incorporate multiple types of inquiry. Three of the other students moved to a more student-directed view of inquiry on at least three of the five essential features. The remaining two students showed mixed results. They had some movement toward student-directed, some movement toward teacher-directed, and some unchanged responses.