

The Power of Intentional Planning

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Abstract

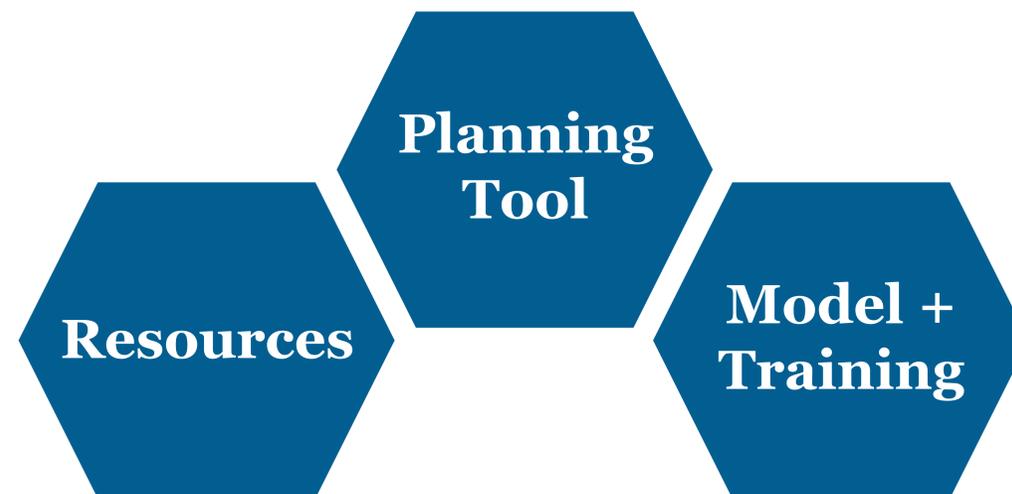
The purpose of this action research is to give teachers meaning and action to the word intentional. Interventions were used to support early childhood educators in improving the intentionality of their lesson planning and instruction. The interventions included a systematic planning tool, a resource binder, and a model through professional development. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected through an electronic survey of teachers both before and after the intervention. Quantitative data was collected through a rubric rating lesson plans on specific characteristics before, during, and after the intervention. Analysis of the data collected revealed when intentionality is well-defined and trained, teachers made considerable improvements in their comfortability and quality of lesson planning.

Introduction

The focus of this research is to determine a system to improve intentionality. In creating a system, research asks that educators keep a couple things in mind. First, research emphasizes the importance of using developmentally appropriate practices. Teachers need these practices at their fingertips when intentionally planning ideal instruction in the early childhood classroom. Second, teachers need to improve characteristics that define intentionality: time management, quality of lesson plans, data analysis, and teacher reflection. The word intentionality is valued and frequently used, but defining it and putting it into action is a much more difficult task.

Methods

The purpose of this action research is to give teachers meaning and action to the word intentional. Interventions were used to support early childhood educators in improving the intentionality of their lesson planning and instruction. The interventions included a systematic planning tool, a resource binder, and a model through professional development.



Qualitative + Quantitative Data

An electronic survey was sent to teachers before and after the study. They were asked to rate themselves from 1-10 on eleven questions about their feelings and experiences with intentional planning, their use of the prep planning tool, and their use and knowledge of the resource binder. The researcher compared the data from the beginning to the end of the six-week professional development trainings.

Quantitative Data

Teachers were asked to submit a lesson plan before and after the trainings. The researcher scored the lesson plans, using a rubric for each lesson plan component and the elements included. The rubric scores each component of the lesson plan based on the inclusion of developmentally appropriate practices from the resource binder and the structure components. The comparison of lesson plans will show the effectiveness of the intervention in creating more intentional-planned lesson plans.

Results

The overall data of this action research shows an increase in intentionality when teachers are provided with the necessary resources and professional development to define the word in the early childhood setting. The teacher survey showed an overall growth of personal comfortability with intentional lesson planning.

Teachers	Before Training (B)	After Training (A)
Teacher A	4	4
Teacher B	6	5
Teacher C	5	6
Teacher D	4	8
Teacher E	4	4
Teacher F	5	9
Teacher G	3	7
Teacher H	5	7
Teacher I	5	7
Teacher J	2	8

The data showed overall improvement in both the representation of resources and structure components within the lesson plan. The greatest amount of growth with intentional planning occurred for centers and large groups. Teachers shared that the resources made the lesson planning more manageable. Because of the organization and access to evidence-based practices, teachers included more resources in their lesson plans.

Conclusion

Teachers expressed a great need to continue the work of defining intentionality in early childhood. The data from this action research shows the growth in intentionality when teachers have access to professional development, resources, and discussion. In an ideal study with more time, each component is a separate action research study: time management, knowledge of curriculum resources, structure of a lesson plan, an intentional lesson plan for small groups, an intentional lesson plan for centers, an intentional lesson plan for large group, an intentional lesson plan for read aloud, and an intentional lesson plan for transitions. Teachers would be given a year to devote to each component, with a very similar structure to this action research.