

Public Abstract

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Title:A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING
EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES ON USING DATA TO
INFORM INSTRUCTION

In spite of the current focus on using data driven decision making in education spurred by the accountability movement, the literature indicates that many educators feel ill equipped to analyze and use data and, further, that there may be several factors contributing to why they feel this way (Jacobs et al., 2009; Ronka, Lachat, Slaughter, & Meltzer, 2008). Although the literature identifies potential factors that may contribute to why educators may have certain perspectives on using data, little is known about the interrelatedness of these factors, which of these factors may be most important, or how best to address these factors through formal coursework or professional development.

The purpose of this study was to address the gap between how policymakers and educational leaders expect data to be used to inform instruction and how classroom-level educators internalize and implement these expectations. This study attempted to address this gap by exploring educators'™ perspectives on using data, their views of their own data analysis skills, how they value and make meaning of data, and the characteristics of their training and/or organizational cultures contribute to these views. Research regarding educators'™ perspectives on using data for decision making should not only address a gap in the literature but also provide an impetus for the development of professional development programs to meet the needs of educators in both leadership and practitioner roles.