

EMU Phase III Qualitative Research Michigan Merit Curriculum 2011

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Curriculum Pacing

“We do stuff and it is switched over the next week, really fast.”- 10th grade, male, geometry student, grade: C, rural high school in Michigan

“The teachers, especially the one we have here...she’s explains it, she does the work, but she gives one explanation about one thing and just goes on to the next thing. She doesn’t take the time to explain it right.” -9th grade, male, unsure of grade but not doing well, urban high school in Michigan

“Hand me a test and I forget everything.”-10th grade, female, geometry student, “math grade isn’t that good”, suburban high school in Michigan

“Only time I try to miss a day is on a big (math) test, I’m like mom I don’t feel good.” - 9th grade, female, algebra student, took one special ed. class in 6th grade, not sure of her grade in math, urban school in Michigan

Student Zone of Relevance

“I’d rather not use math in my future (job).”-9th grade, male, algebra student, not doing well in math, urban high school in Michigan

“I really don’t (see how math is useful). I see how adding and subtracting, and multiplying and dividing go in. But when it comes to the negative b one where you square root everything I don’t see where I am going to use that? Why do I even need to learn it?” -10th grade, female, geometry, does poorly in math, suburban high school in Michigan

“All the math I have right now is pretty much all the math I will ever need in my life...I don’t think I will ever need algebra ever...it shouldn’t be a recommended class.”-9th grade, female, algebra student, grade: D+, school qualified as a “high risk student”, suburban high school in Michigan

Multiple Math Teachers in an Academic Year

“In this class...I would say we had four (different teachers)...it was tough, but now I am happy we got one set teacher for the rest of the year.” -10th grade, female, grade: A, urban high school in Michigan

“You’d get used to one teacher finally. It takes a little while, and the students here aren’t too trusting-that’s understandable...you finally get used to it and then to have that ripped away from you and then be told by a completely different person this is how you are supposed to do things...”

“Definitely one thing we need in math classes is stability and a teacher who will stay there...It takes a while for some of the students here to actually be able to build bonds with their teachers. I mean a lot of the students here come from rougher homes and it is just kind of natural to have those barriers up...” -10th grade, female, has a 504 because of her difficulties in math, transferred b/c of math issues, grade: C-, urban high school in Michigan

Intellectual Math Processing Skills

“It was kind of hard, it has always been hard for me, I don’t know why. I have a hard time understanding it.”-9th grade, male, not doing well in math, urban high school in Michigan

“Math is math. You can’t beat it. It messes with you.”-9th grade, male, not doing well in math, algebra student, urban high school in Michigan

“Overall, they need a lot of help. A lot of the students do...There are very rare times when you get someone that actually understands it.” -10th grade, female, has a 504 because of her difficulties in math, transferred b/c of math issues, grade: C-, urban high school in MI

Its like I don’t know how I’m gonna do it. Its like it feels like I am doing good, but I know I am doing the worst ever. Like I feel like I am the worst in the class...”-10th grade, female, geometry student, doing poorly in math, suburban high school in Michigan

“Like when he is explaining it on the board I will understand it, but when I get home and like try and do it by myself I just forget everything. When I look at my notes I get all confused...I just don’t get it.” -9th grade, male, algebra student, struggling in math, suburban high school in MI

“I was really frustrated with it. That would stop me from doing a lot of my work and that is part of the reason I failed...” -10th grade, female, algebra student, grade: C+, failed Algebra II, took study skills classes, suburban high school in Michigan

“It is kind of like all gibberish to me, all those numbers and everything else...It sucks because I am so smart...I understand things so well and I look at things differently, its just math to me I get stuck and I get frustrated.” -9th grade, female, Algebra student, grade: D+, qualified as a “high risk student”, suburban high school in Michigan

Inadequate Preparation from Middle School

“We just started back working in our textbooks because so many kids didn’t know basic math so we started of doing basic math and then we eased on up to each section, which made it very easy-because if she would have just put it on us we wouldn’t of got it.”-9th grade, female, algebra student, struggles in math, took one special ed. class in 6th grade, urban high school in Michigan

“I didn’t understand what was going on, I did not learn my times tables past 11 or 12 until recently.-which made a really difficult middle school...it just kept going too fast. Maybe it is just this school district but it seems that the teachers are so rushed to get everything to fit into the curriculum that they just kind of blow it over all the student’s heads and that’s the end of it. There, you know the basics-now go!”-10th grade, female, algebra student, has a 504 because of her difficulties in math, transferred schools because of math issues, has a C- in math, urban high school in Michigan