

Pre-service Elementary Teachers' Preferences and Competencies in Relation to Inquiry-based Instruction and High Quality Questions

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ABSTRACT This study investigates pre-service elementary teachers' preferences and competencies related to the design of inquiry-based instruction and the posing of questions in science lessons. The three Lesson Plans (LPs) that pre-service teachers created were analyzed for their preferences in terms of the types of instruction and questions. The pre-service teachers completed two forms inquiring about their preferences. Volunteer participants in focus groups were then interviewed about their general preferences. The results of this study reveal that pre-service elementary science teachers' general preferences were for active direct instruction, didactic direct instruction, and guided inquiry. In most of their lessons plans they employed didactic direct and active direct instruction. The results indicate that pre-service teachers' beliefs influenced their choice of instructional design. Even as they write better questions, they seem to have difficulty asking high-level questions in microteaching activities, limited, no doubt, by unfamiliarity with questioning techniques and lack of teaching experience.