

COMPARING THE CLASSROOM PRACTICE OF TEACHING PRIMARY MATHEMATICS IN ENGLAND AND QATAR

Aziza Alsaadi
University of Surrey Roehampton

Three levels of mathematics curriculum were identified: the intended, the implemented and the attained curriculum (Dirks and Robitaille, 1982). Alexander (1992) suggested a framework for aspects of practice in primary classrooms that serves as a useful prompt to those involved in the judgement of that practice (the implemented curriculum) which are the *content*, the *context*, the *pedagogic process* and the *management* of teaching and learning. This study focuses on the similarities and differences in the context and the pedagogical practices of teaching primary mathematics between the English and the Qatari classrooms.

Eight primary classes in each country were selected to cover the entire primary age range from classes whose teachers were willing to participate in the study in both countries. Each classroom was observed for three lessons using a structured observation schedule.

The box-and-whisker plot and one-way ANOVA were performed in order to assist the analysis and comparisons of the duration of different activities used in the two countries. In contrast to the findings of the TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study) with regards to England (Wiliam, 1998), the analysis of data showed that teachers in both countries devote a high proportion of lesson time to whole class activities. Individual, group work and off-task activities were experienced in both countries, while paired work was evident only in the English lessons. The most salient differences between the two countries were in the differentiation by setting (despite the current trend in England of reducing the range of pupils' attainment in a class), seating arrangement and using information technology.

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