

Assessment
&
Integrated Resource Package
Survey

Analysis of Responses



Achievement Standards Branch
Ministry of Education

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Executive Summary

In the last nine months the Achievement Standards Branch researched models for developing achievement standards and assessment support information that could be used to assist teachers in assessing student's achievement. One of the research activities was the distribution of a survey in June 2002 to all BC teachers (in Public, Independent & Band Schools) asking them to identify what type of assistance they prefer in assessing their students.

Approximately 3,000 educators responded, representing more than 7% of the BC teaching population. From the survey responses, a number of conclusions can be drawn:

1. *Do teachers use their IRPs? How often?*

The unequivocal response is, yes. Less than four percent of respondents indicated that they "never" use an IRP. Ninety-six percent of respondents reported that they refer to their IRPs at least once while teaching a course while 64% of respondents reported that they used their IRPs two or more times while teaching a course.

2. *To assist me in assessing students' achievement, I would like to have...*

Respondents consistently rated highest the following types of support, in decreasing order, in assessing their students' achievement of the provincial curriculum:

- Specific description(s) as to how well a student is expected to perform;
- Information on subject-specific assessment strategies and methodologies;
- Specific assessment tools such as black-line master scoring guides, rating scales, and checklist;
- Sample assessment items (e.g., objective test questions, performance based tasks);
- Samples of actual student work; and,
- Sample assessment plans by unit or by course.

3. *How useful do teachers rate the various components of the IRP?*

Respondents rated the prescribed learning outcomes (PLO) as the most useful of the IRP components. A number of comments suggest that the IRP components would be more useful to teachers if:

- The learning outcomes were fewer in number and more specific in nature;
- The instructional and assessment strategies were more concrete, specific and of practical use to teachers; and,
- The recommended learning resources were more current and affordable.

4. *Which, if any, of the four components of the IRP do teachers use in their teaching?*

Respondents were consistent in the various IRP components they reported using in their day-to-day teaching. These include, in decreasing use by IRP component:

- Prescribed Learning Outcomes - Used for parent/teacher interviews, student reporting, and developing course and unit outlines;
- Suggested Instructional Strategies - Used for developing lesson plans, in-service activities, and developing unit plans;
- Suggested Assessment Strategies - Used for formative and summative assessment as well as student reporting; and,
- Recommended Learning Resources - Used for ordering learning resources.

It is apparent that BC teachers are using their IRPs, but it is also clear that improvements to the IRP could make them more useful. These changes can be generalized as follows:

1. Reduce the number of prescribed learning outcomes while at the same time making them more specific (i.e., reduce the overall amount of “content” in each course/grade level);
2. Provide more subject- and grade-specific support material for both instruction and assessment; and,
3. Streamline the entire IRP document and make available an on-line/CD version that makes it easier for teachers to use the IRP as a planning tool.

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Analysis of Responses

The following is the analysis of the results from the survey distributed in June 2002.

Respondent Demographics

Total number of respondents = 2,954

Public School 75% Independent or Band School 15% Unidentified 10%

Distribution of Responses by District

All school districts provided at least one response to the survey. Specific percentages of school district responses are outlined in Table 1 below. Each school district's student population as a percentage of the provincial student population is also shown for comparison with each district's survey response rate. There are a few districts that are under or over represented by the survey responses, but the large majority of districts appear to have proportional representation in the survey results.

Table 1: Distribution of Survey Responses by District

School District	% of Prov. Pop.	% of Total Survey Responses	School District	% of Prov. Pop.	% of Total Survey Responses	School District	% of Prov. Pop.	% of Total Survey Responses
05	1.1	1.4	44	3.0	2.3	69	0.9	1.0
06	0.7	1.0	45	1.0	1.5	70	0.8	0.2
08	1.0	1.4	46	0.7	0.8	71	1.5	3.1
10	0.1	0.2	47	0.5	0.8	72	1.1	0.8
19	0.2	0.2	48	0.7	1.0	73	2.7	6.5
20	0.9	0.8	49	0.1	< 0.1	74	0.4	0.5
22	1.6	3.6	50	0.2	0.3	75	1.2	0.9
23	3.6	3.6	51	0.3	0.1	78	0.4	0.4
27	1.3	1.0	52	0.5	0.6	79	1.7	2.8
28	0.8	0.6	53	0.5	0.5	81	0.2	1.1
33	2.0	1.2	54	0.5	0.3	82	1.1	1.4
34	3.1	2.0	57	2.9	2.9	83	1.4	2.0
35	3.4	3.7	58	0.5	1.0	84	0.1	< 0.1
36	10.0	5.9	59	0.8	0.5	85	0.4	1.0
37	2.9	2.2	60	1.0	2.6	87	0.1	0.2
38	3.9	2.2	61	3.6	1.3	89	0.9	< 0.05
39	9.9	9.8	62	1.5	2.9	91	0.1	0.6
40	1.1	0.6	63	1.4	1.7	92	0.5	0.2
41	4.0	2.5	64	0.3	0.2	93	1.2	0.5
42	2.5	1.4	67	1.2	1.6			
43	5.5	3.5	68	2.7	4.2			

Distribution of Responses by Teaching Experience & Grade Level

Eighty-two percent of survey respondents (see Tables 2 & 3) were classroom teachers and were evenly divided between classroom generalists (42 %) and subject specialists (40%). Other categories of respondents included Learning Assistance/Resource teachers (5%), Principals or Vice-Principals (4%), and Counsellors (2%). The majority of Primary and Intermediate teacher respondents were, not surprisingly, classroom generalists (70% and 59% respectively) while the majority of Junior and Senior Secondary teachers that responded to the survey were subject specialists (74% and 78% respectively). A significant percentage (18%) of first-year teachers reported that they were Teachers on Call (TOCs) while all other sub-groups were comprised of no more than 2% TOCs.

Table 2: Respondent Category Organized by Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience (Years)	Classroom Generalist (%)	Subject Specialist (%)	LA/Resource Teacher (%)	Principal or Vice Principal (%)	Counsellor (%)	TOC (%)	Other (%)
ALL	42	40	5	4	2	1	6
First	26	47	2	0	0	18	6
2 to 5	47	45	3	0	0	2	3
6 to 10	43	43	5	3	2	1	4
>10	42	37	6	6	2	0	7

Table 3: Respondent Category Organized by Teaching Grade Level

Teaching Grade Level	Classroom Generalist (%)	Subject Specialist (%)	LA/Resource Teacher (%)	Principal or Vice Principal (%)	Counsellor (%)	Other (%)
ALL	42	40	5	4	2	7
Primary	70	5	9	4	1	11
Intermediate	60	13	9	7	1	11
Junior	9	74	5	7	3	7
Senior	7	78	3	2	3	7

Figure 1 on the following page illustrates the different grade levels that survey respondents teach. The majority of respondents teach the Junior level (44%) and the Senior level (39%). The Primary and Intermediate levels represented 32% and 35% of all respondents respectively. The total percentage is greater than 100% because many of the respondents teach more than one grade level (e.g., Junior and Senior Secondary).

Figure 1: Teaching Grade Levels

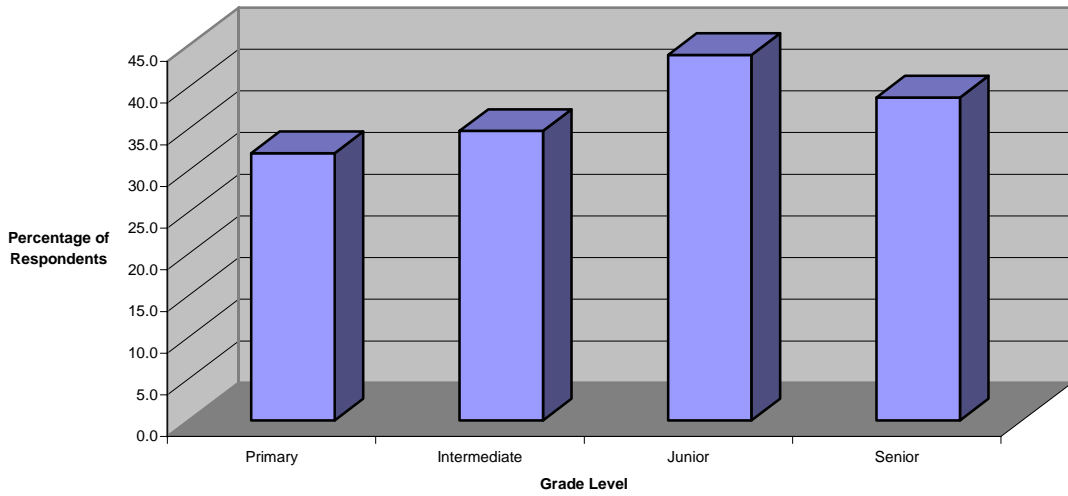
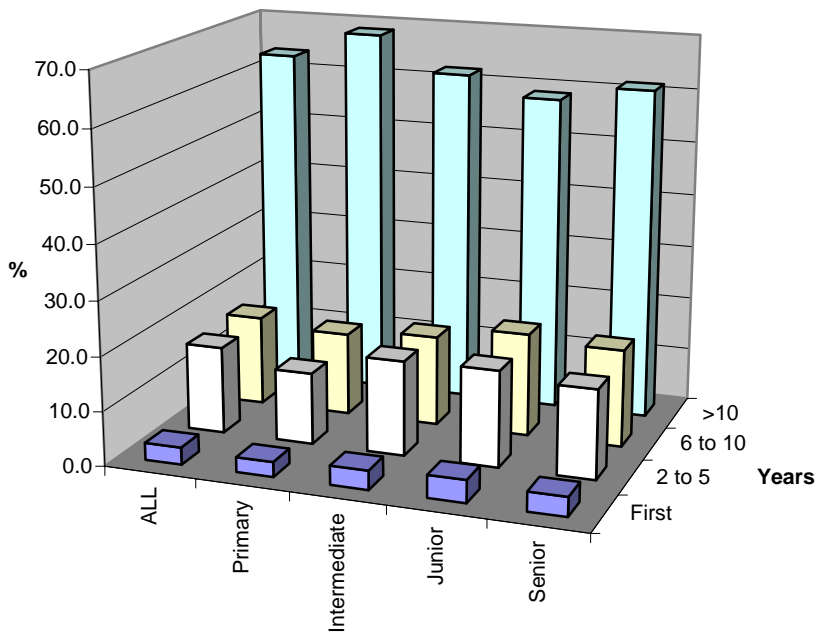


Figure 2 shows that, overall, 64% of respondents reported having taught for more than ten years. Primary teachers had the greatest percentage of teachers with more than ten years teaching experience (69%) with Junior teachers having the lowest percentage (59%). At all levels first-year teachers represented approximately 3% of respondents. Teachers in the two-five year and six- ten year range of teaching experience were equally represented at 16% and 17% of respondents respectively.

Figure 2: Teaching Experience



Respondents' Use of IRPs

When asked, “How often do you refer to an IRP in your teaching?” 64% of respondents overall indicated that they use IRPs “Occasionally” (several times a course) or Regularly (on an ongoing basis). Primary and Intermediate teachers reported using the IRPs on a more regular basis (71% and 73% respectively) than did Junior or Senior level teachers (54% and 55% respectively). First-year teachers reported referring to the IRPs most often (85% reporting occasional or regular use) with a decreasing amount of use as respondents teaching experience increased (from 66% to 63%). Tables 4 and 5 provide the specific breakdown of responses by teaching experience and grade level.

Table 4: IRP Use Organized by Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience (Years)	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Occasionally (%)	Regularly (%)
ALL	3.9	31.6	47.9	16.3
First	2.2	12.9	63.4	21.5
2 to 5	1.9	31.6	48.2	18.1
6 to 10	2.4	33.1	50.3	14.2
>10	4.8	32.1	46.6	16.1

Table 5: IRP Use Organized by Teaching Grade Level

Grade Level	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Occasionally (%)	Regularly (%)
ALL	3.9	31.6	47.9	16.3
Primary	2.6	26.0	54.3	16.9
Intermediate	2.4	24.8	52.3	20.2
Junior	5.6	39.8	41.9	12.4
Senior	5.4	39.4	41.3	13.6

Respondents' Preference for Type of Assessment Support

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which assessment tools they would like to have to assist them in assessing their students' achievement. The options provided were based on a five-point Likert scale; a weighted average score based on percentage of responses was calculated for each assessment tool. An average score of one represents a unanimous “Strongly Disagree” response while an average score of five represents a unanimous “Strongly Agree”. The responses summarized in Tables 6, 7, & 8 are listed in order of overall preference by average weighted score, and are organized by teaching grade level, teaching experience, and IRP use. The five assessment tools that scored the highest for each sub-category are marked in bold.

Table 6: Assessment Tool Preference Organized by Grade Level

Assessment Tool	Grade Level				
	ALL	Primary	Intermediate	Junior	Senior
Specific Descriptions	4.1	4.3	4.3	3.9	3.9
Assessment Strategies	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0
Specific Assessment Tools	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.0	3.9
Sample Assessment Items	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2
Student Exemplars	4.0	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.9
Test Banks	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.2
Assessment Plans	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0
Developing Rubrics & Rating Scales	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.6
Tables of Specs	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.8
Cross-curricular Assessment	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.5

Table 7: Assessment Tool Preference Organized by Teaching Experience

Assessment Tool	Teaching Experience				
	ALL	First Year	2 to 5 Years	6 to 10 Years	> 10 Years
Specific Descriptions	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.1
Assessment Strategies	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1
Specific Assessment Tools	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.1
Sample Assessment Items	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1
Student Exemplars	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0
Test Banks	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0
Assessment Plans	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0
Developing Rubrics & Rating Scales	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6
Tables of Specs	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7
Cross-curricular Assessment	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6

Table 8: Assessment Tool Preference Organized by IRP Use

Assessment Tool	IRP Use				
	ALL	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Regularly
Specific Descriptions	4.1	3.4	4.0	4.2	4.3
Assessment Strategies	4.1	2.7	4.0	4.1	4.2
Specific Assessment Tools	4.1	3.6	4.0	4.2	4.2
Sample Assessment Items	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.2
Student Exemplars	4.0	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.1
Test Banks	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1
Assessment Plans	4.0	3.7	3.5	4.1	3.8
Developing Rubrics & Rating Scales	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.8	3.9
Tables of Specs	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.8	3.9
Cross-curricular Assessment	3.6	3.1	3.4	3.7	3.9

The results are fairly consistent when viewed by grade level, teaching experience, or IRP use. The majority of respondent sub-groups agreed that they would like to have specific assessment tools provided to support them in assessing their students' achievement. Ranked in order of preference, these assessment tools are:

- Specific description(s) as to how well a student is expected to perform;
- Information on subject-specific assessment strategies and methodologies;
- Specific assessment tools such as black-line master scoring guides, rating scales, and checklist;
- Sample assessment items (e.g., objective test questions, performance-based tasks);
- Samples of actual student work; and,
- Sample assessment plans by unit or by course.

Respondents who reported not using the IRPs scored “Information on subject-specific assessment strategies and methodologies” the lowest assessment tool overall. In fact, all ratings for the assessment tools scored by this sub-group were below 4.0 (Somewhat Agree). This is in contrast to those sub-groups who reported using the IRP at least once per course. Those sub-groups rated the assessment tools much higher.

Another significant difference in responses relates to the preference for a comprehensive test bank of questions correlated to grade- and subject-specific learning outcomes. Primary and Intermediate teachers scored this as sixth on their preferred list while Junior and Senior teachers scored this type of assessment tool first on their list (tied with sample assessment items). All sub-groups of respondents scored the following three assessment tools the lowest:

- Information on how to develop rubrics and rating scales for measuring student performance;
- Tables of specifications for formative & summative assessment; and,
- Information on how to assess cross-curricular learning outcomes.

IRP(s) References

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which IRP(s) they were referring to when:

1. They rated the four IRP components - Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs), Suggested Instructional Strategies (SIS), Suggested Assessment Strategies (SAS), and Recommended Learning Resources (RLR); and,
2. They identified what teaching activities they used their IRPs for.

The results of this question are broken down by:

- All Respondents (Figure 3);
- Teaching grade (Figure 4: Primary Teachers, Figure 5: Intermediate, Figure 6: Junior Teachers, and Figure 7: Senior Teachers); and,
- IRP use (Figure 8: Never Refer to IRPs, Figure 9: Rarely Refer to IRPs, Figure 10: Occasionally Refer to IRPs, and Figure 11: Regularly Refer to IRPs).

Overall, survey respondents consistently referred to the following four subject IRPs more often than any others when answering the survey questions:

- Science (23% of respondents);
- English Language Arts (22% of respondents);
- Social Studies (17% of respondents); and,
- Mathematics (9% of respondents).

When these results are grouped by teaching grade level it is apparent that the IRPs that Primary and Intermediate teachers most often referred to are Science (27% and 25%), English Language Arts (26% and 25%), and Social Studies (19% and 21%) respectively. Junior and Senior teachers followed a similar pattern, but with one exception. The IRPs these teachers most often referred to are Science (19% and 21%), English Language Arts (18%), Mathematics (16% and 15%), and Social Studies (15% and 16%) respectively. These patterns are illustrated in the following figures (3 through 7).

Figure 3: IRPs Respondents are Referring to When Answering the Survey

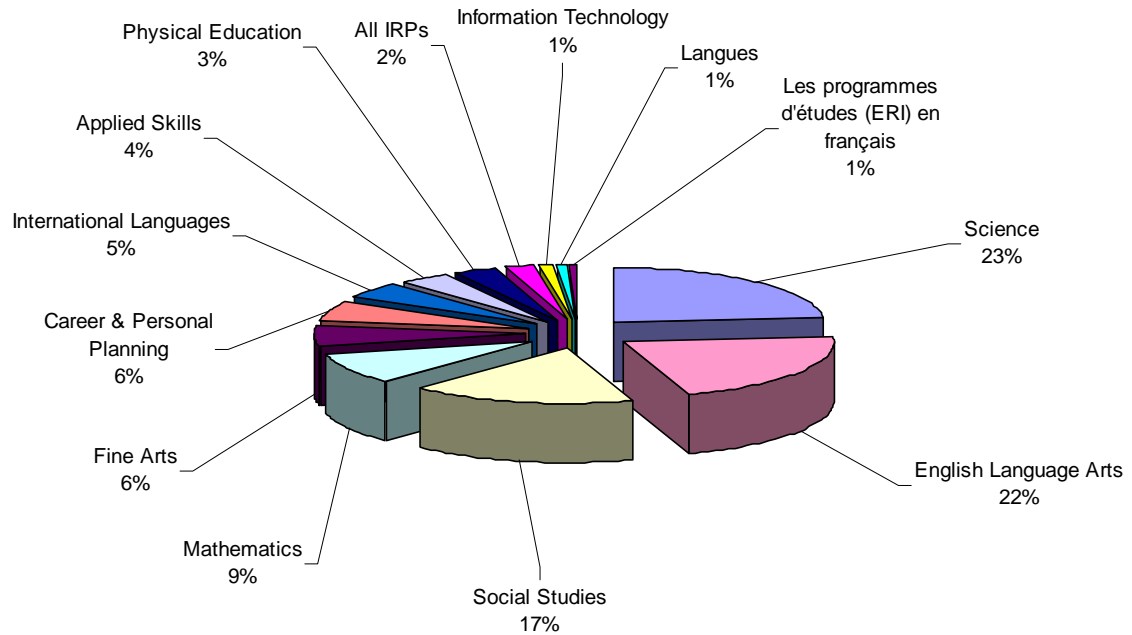


Figure 4: IRPs Primary Teachers are Referring to When Answering the Survey

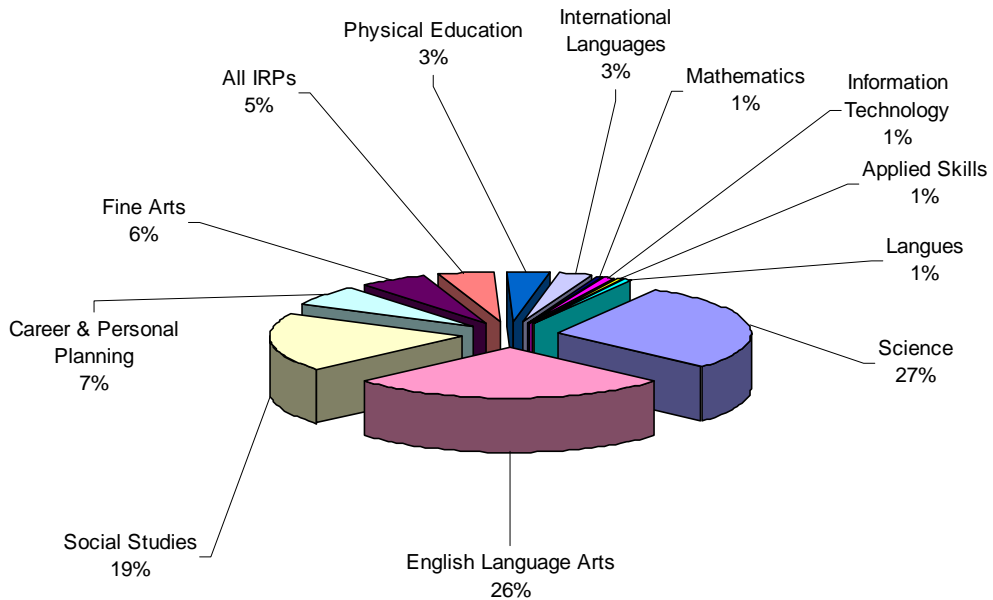


Figure 5: IRPs Intermediate Teachers are Referring to When Answering the Survey

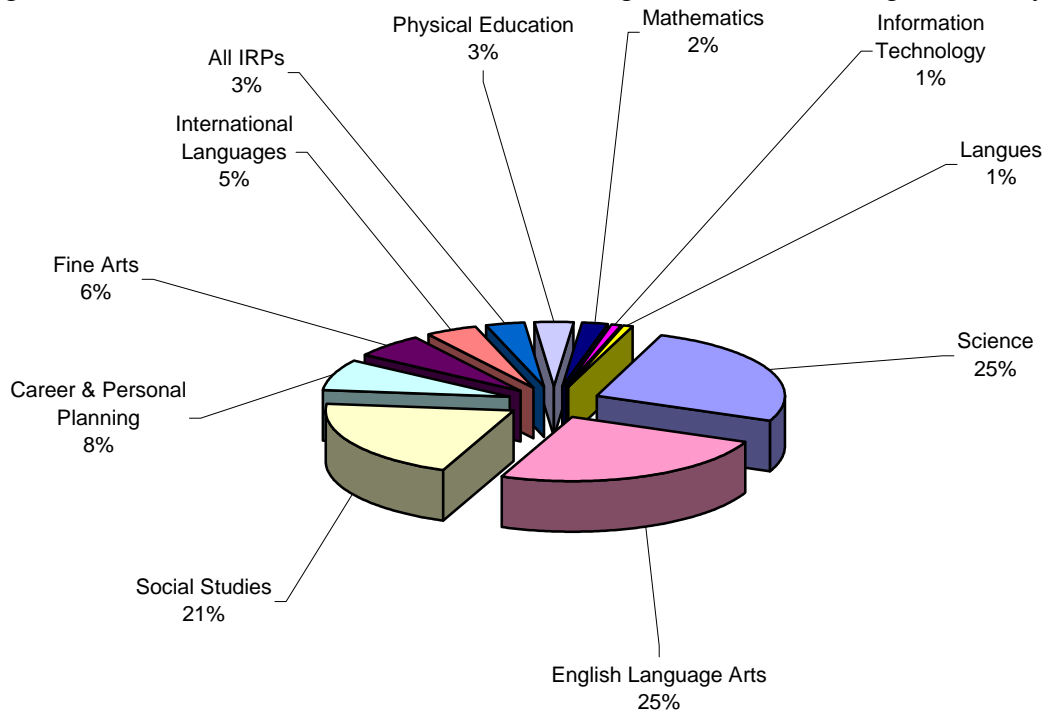


Figure 6: IRPs Junior Teachers are Referring to When Answering the Survey

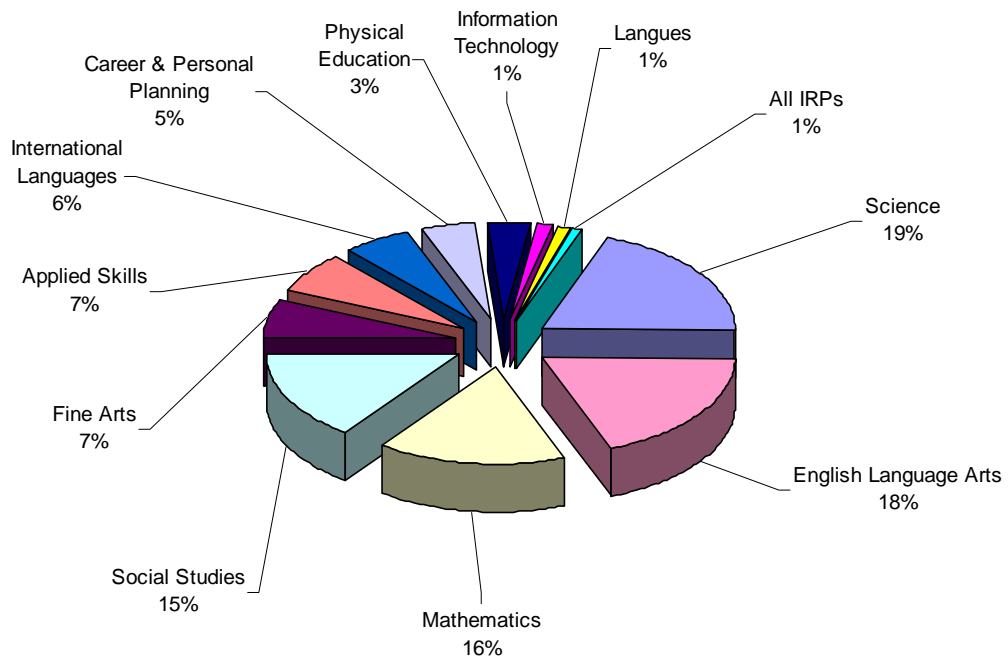
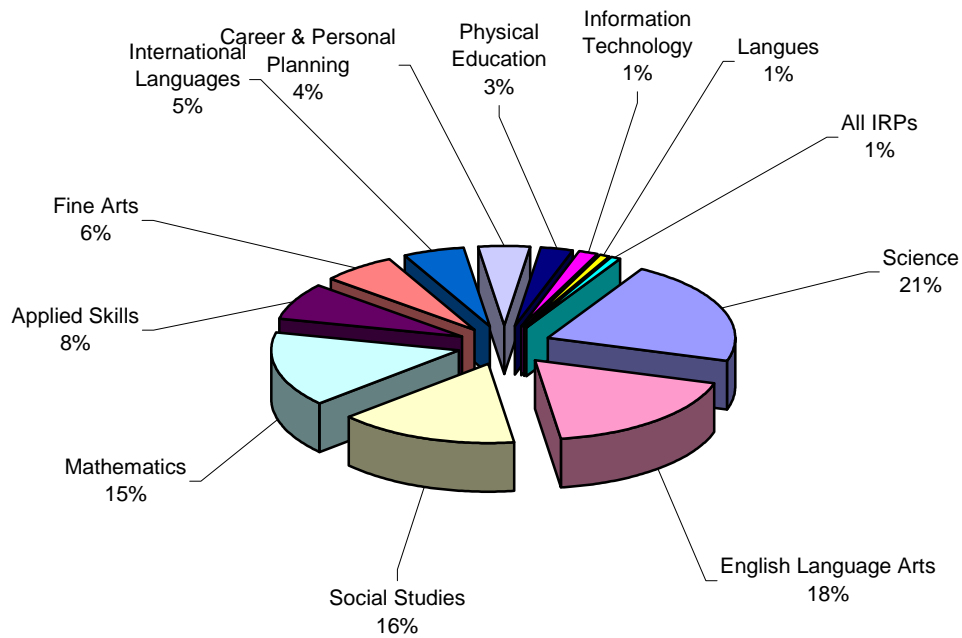


Figure 7: IRPs Senior Teachers are Referring to When Answering the Survey



When the same data are grouped by IRP use (see Figures 8 through 11) it is clear that the small percentage of respondents who Never (3.9%) or Rarely (31.6%) refer to their IRPs when teaching, are referring to Mathematics (19% and 21%), English Language Arts (16% and 20%), Science (15% and 18%), and Social Studies (15% and 16%) IRPs. Conversely, those IRPs that respondents reported referring to Occasionally (47.9%) or Regularly (16.3%) are the same four: Mathematics (22%), Science (22% and 25%), English Language Arts (20% and 16%), and Social Studies (17%).

Figure 8: Distribution of IRPs by IRP Use (Never Use)

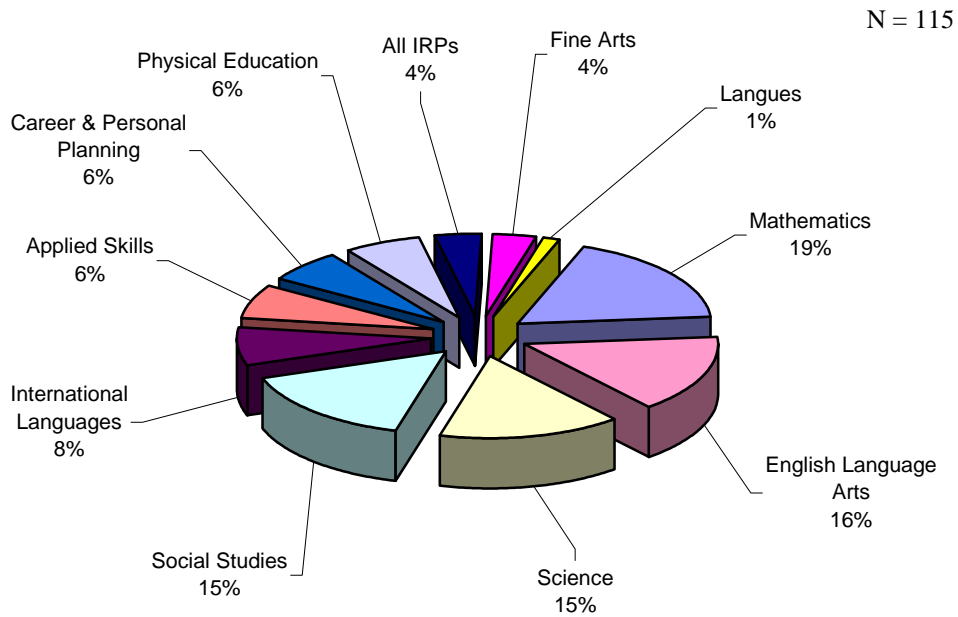


Figure 9: Distribution of IRPs by IRP Use (Rarely Use)

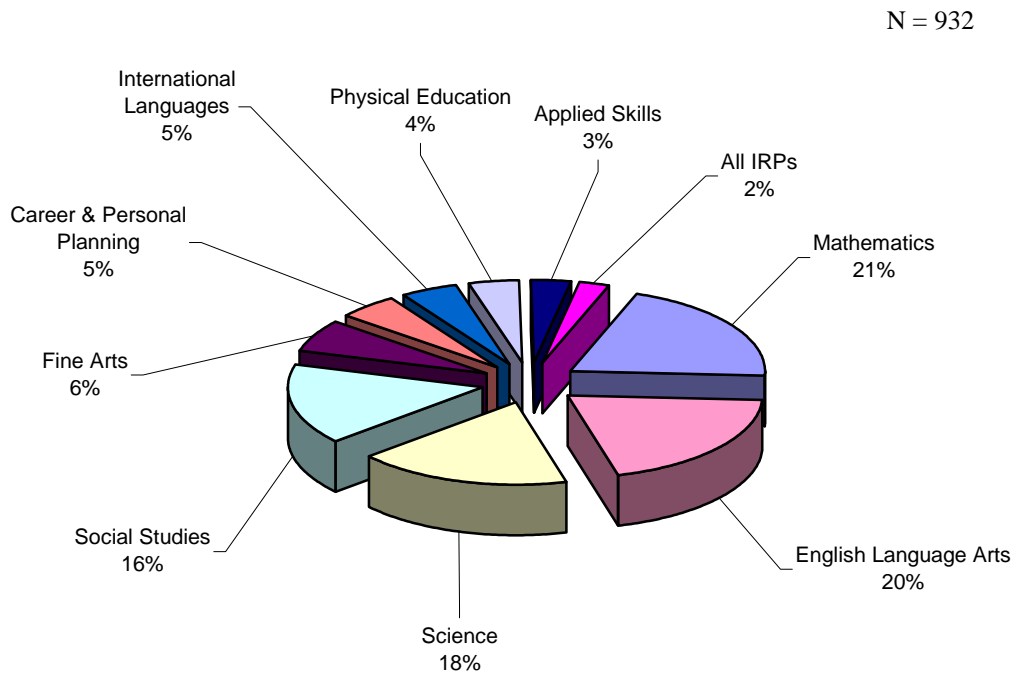


Figure 10: Distribution of IRPs by IRP Use (Occasionally Use)

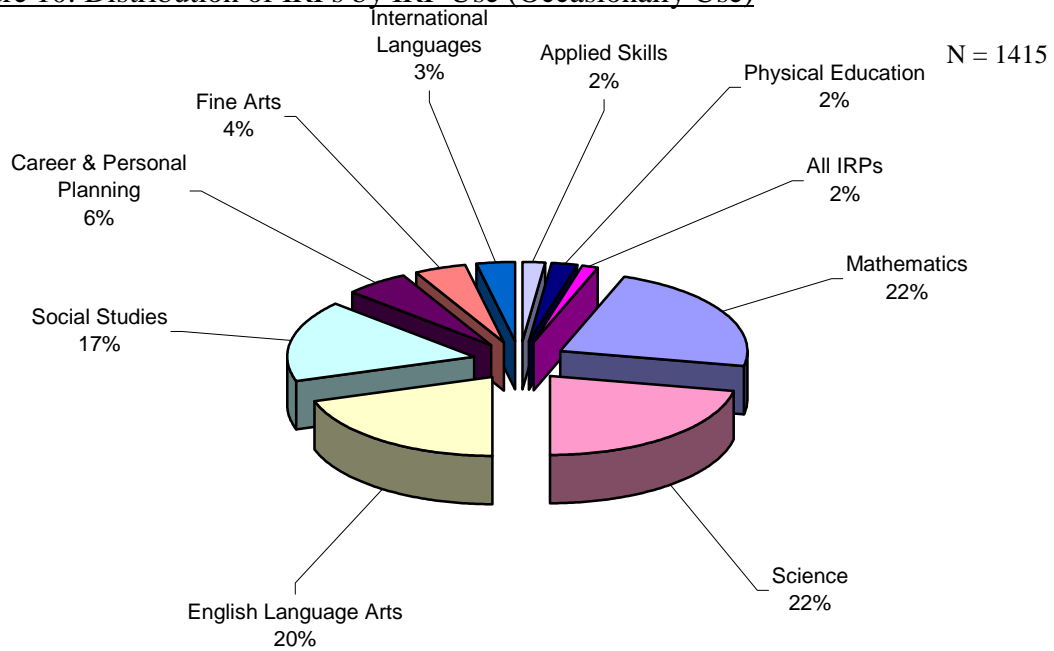
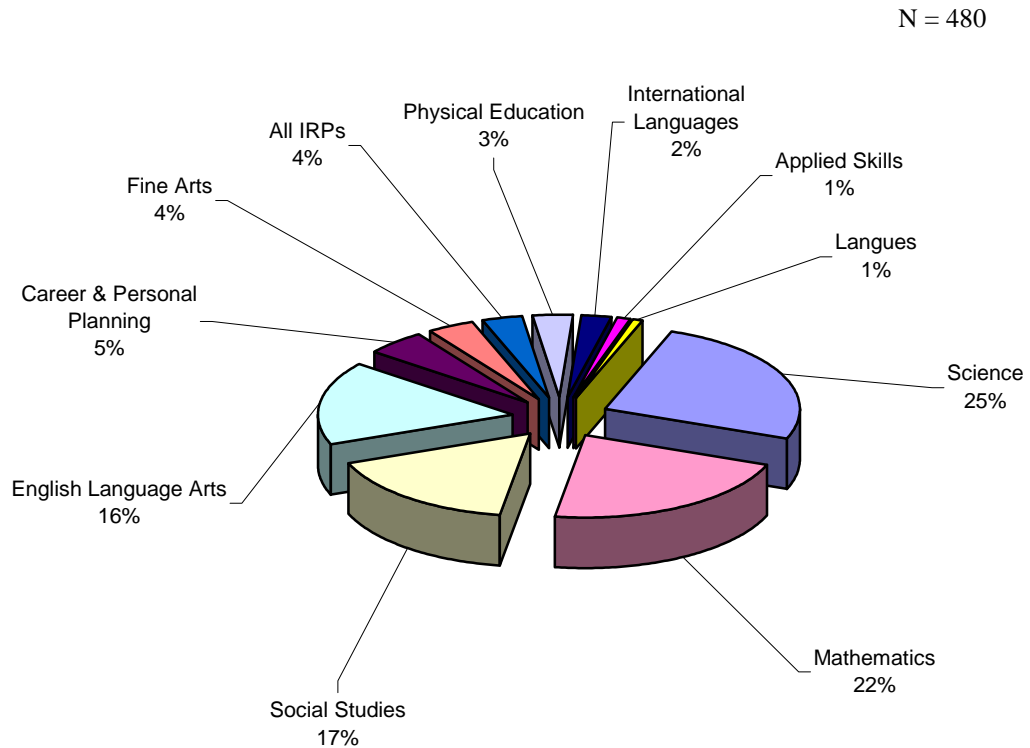


Figure 11: Distribution of IRPs by IRP Use (Regularly Use)



Respondents' Rating of IRP Components

Respondents were asked to rate the four main components of IRPs using a four-point Likert scale with Not Useful = 1, Somewhat Useful = 2, Useful = 3, or Very Useful = 4. Weighted averages were calculated for each of the components and then grouped by teaching grade level (Figure 12) and teaching experience (Figure 13).

Figure 12: Usefulness of IRP Components by Teaching Grade Level

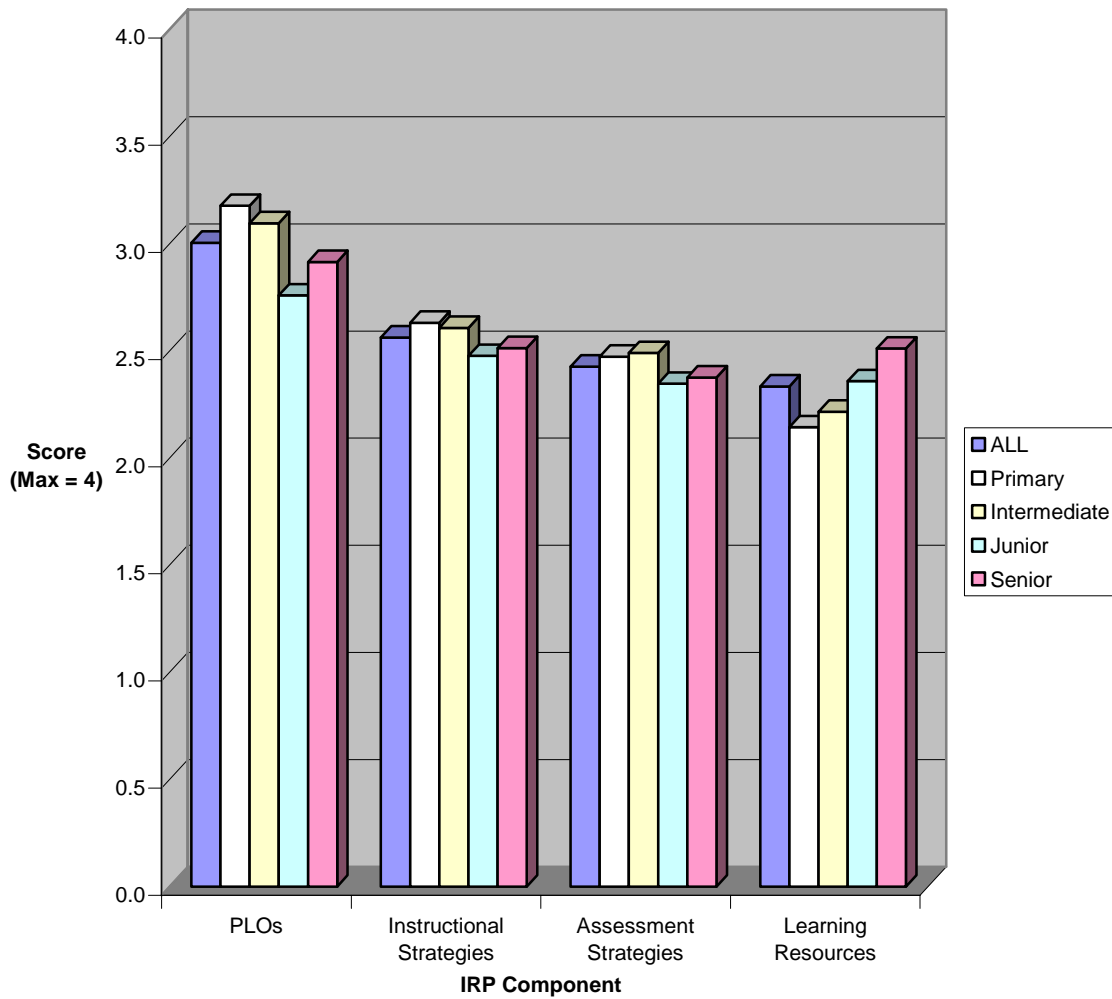
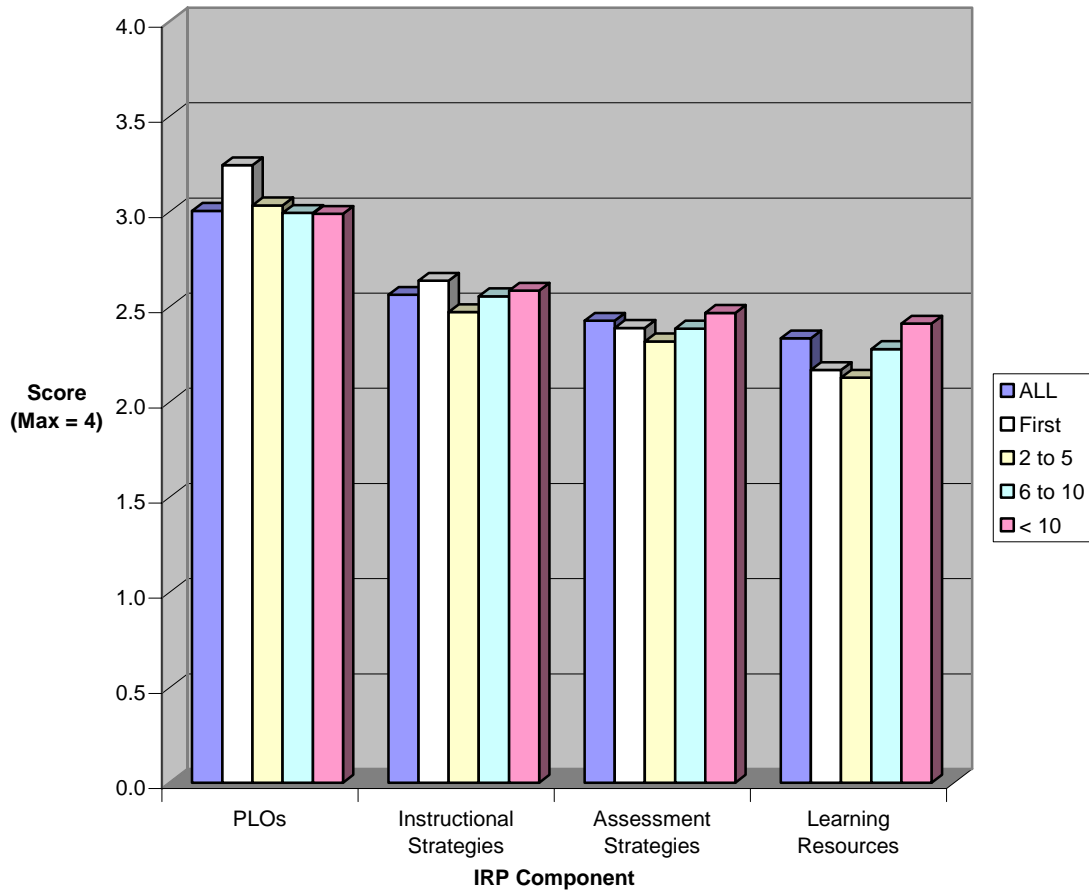


Figure 13: Usefulness of IRP Components by Teaching Experience



Prescribed Learning Outcomes

Figures 12 and 13 show that, relative to the other three IRP components, respondents rated the PLOs the highest with a score of 3.0 (Useful). First-year and Primary teachers rated the PLOs the highest (3.2), Intermediate teachers rated them the next highest (3.1) and Junior and Senior Secondary teachers each rated them the lowest, 2.8 and 2.9 respectively.

When asked to explain their ratings, respondents commonly stated that:

- “This is my teaching Bible.”
- “If I didn’t have PLOs how would I know where I was going?”
- “I have been teaching a long time and so much of this material and information is second nature. Nevertheless, I always refer to it.”

- “I have taught over 40 distinct courses and this is where I always start. I also use these as the basis for my assessment and build task types in reference to these outcomes.”

Comments were evenly divided between describing the PLOs as “too vague” and “too specific.” Some of the respondents indicated that the concern was with specific IRPs. In particular, Language Arts was seen by most as “too vague” while they usually found Mathematics to be more specific and, therefore, more clear. Other respondents describe the characteristics of “vague” and “prescriptive” PLOs as being well balanced. For example:

- “It is specific enough to give me guidelines about what to teach. It is general enough that I have the freedom to go into more or less depth given factors such as time, student ability, etc.”
- “They are general enough to allow teachers the autonomy they deserve, yet clear enough to guide teachers towards a common goal.”

Table 9 separates the respondent’s ratings of the prescribed learning outcomes according to their use of IRPs. Somewhat surprising is the fact that, of the 115 respondents who reported not using IRPs, 44% still found them *Useful* or *Very Useful*. It appears that the more often respondents use their IRPs, the higher they rate the PLOs. As respondents’ IRP use increased from *Rarely* to *Regularly*, the response ratings of *Useful* or *Very Useful* increased from 60% to 86%.

Table 9: Usefulness of Prescribed Learning Outcomes by IRP Use

IRP Use	Not Useful (%)	Somewhat Useful (%)	Useful (%)	Very Useful (%)
Never (N = 115)	23	33	24	20
Rarely (N = 932)	7	33	38	22
Occasionally (N = 1415)	2	22	40	36
Regularly (N = 480)	1	14	32	54

Suggested Instructional Strategies (SIS)

All categories of respondents rated the suggested instructional strategies similarly as between *Somewhat Useful* and *Useful* (average score = 2.6). Teachers with more than 10 years experience tended to state that they use their own instructional strategies and teachers in their first year either wanted more detail or felt the strategies were not interesting or creative.

- I use them “when I don’t know what else to do.”

- “The suggestions that exist in the IRPs are valuable in two ways. First, they offer a base, or an idea to start with, and then alter to best-fit students’ interest, needs, etc. Secondly, they serve as a useful way to check up on whether or not I am interpreting the learning outcomes accurately.”

Table 10 separates respondents’ ratings of the suggested instructional strategies according to their use of IRPs. All four groups of respondents rated the suggested instructional strategies roughly the same as *Somewhat Useful* or *Useful* (60% to 77%). The highest rating (60% *Useful* or *Very Useful*) came from the group of respondents who reported *Regularly* using the IRP.

Table 10: Usefulness of Suggested Instructional Strategies by IRP Use

IRP Use	Not Useful (%)	Somewhat Useful (%)	Useful (%)	Very Useful (%)
Never (N = 115)	27	30	30	13
Rarely (N = 932)	13	43	33	11
Occasionally (N = 1415)	8	40	37	15
Regularly (N = 480)	4	36	36	24

Suggested Assessment Strategies (SAS)

All groups of respondents rated this IRP component approximately the same (average rating = 2.4) and indicated that they *Rarely* used the suggested assessment strategies. First-year teachers were the most positive indicating that there were “some good ideas but not many.” Teachers in other groups also indicated these strategies could be a good starting place but that they developed their own in response to student needs and ideas from colleagues. Suggestions for improving this component of the IRP include:

- “Need rubrics, checklists, assessment tools, actual student samples.”
- “Need to be more specific, actual assessment tools.”
- “Need more variety.”

Table 11 separates the respondent’s ratings of the suggested assessment strategies according to their use of IRPs. All four groups of respondents rated the suggested assessment strategies fairly low as *Somewhat Useful* or *Not Useful* (average scores ranging from 50% to 64%), with the highest rating (50% *Useful* or *Very Useful*) coming from the group of respondents who reported *Regularly* using the IRP.

Table 11: Usefulness of Suggested Assessment Strategies by IRP Use

IRP Use	Not Useful (%)	Somewhat Useful (%)	Useful (%)	Very Useful (%)
Never (N = 115)	25	39	26	8
Rarely (N = 932)	14	45	31	9
Occasionally (N = 1415)	10	44	37	9
Regularly (N = 480)	7	43	36	14

Recommended Learning Resources (RLR)

This IRP component received the lowest score from all categories of respondents (average = 2.3). Senior and Junior teachers rated the RLRs the highest (averages = 2.4 & 2.5 respectively) while teachers with two to five years experience and Primary and Intermediate teachers rated them the lowest (2.1, 2.1, & 2.2 respectively). There was little difference in perspective on resources among the groups of teachers. They indicated the list was interesting, although often outdated. The respondents were virtually unanimous in listing accessibility and affordability as issues that forced them to use their own resources or whatever was available in their school.

Table 12 separates respondents' ratings of the recommended learning resources according to their use of IRPs. All four groups of respondents rated the RLR the lowest of the four IRP components (*Somewhat Useful* or *Not Useful* ranging from 55% to 66%), with the highest rating (45% *Useful* or *Very Useful*) coming from the group of respondents who reported *Regularly* using the IRP.

Table 12: Usefulness of Recommended Learning Resources by IRP Use

IRP Use	Not Useful (%)	Somewhat Useful (%)	Useful (%)	Very Useful (%)
Never (N = 115)	30	36	26	9
Rarely (N = 932)	22	37	29	12
Occasionally (N = 1415)	20	39	28	13
Regularly (N = 480)	21	34	30	15

What Activities do Teachers Use IRPs For?

Respondents were asked to identify which, if any, of the four components of the IRP they use for a variety of teaching activities

Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLO):

Figures 14, 15, & 16 show the results of this question relative to the prescribed learning outcomes. Values in each bar graph represent percentages of each sub-group (by teaching experience, teaching grade level, and IRP use) that indicated that they use PLOs for the stated teaching activities.

Figure 14: PLO Use by Teaching Experience

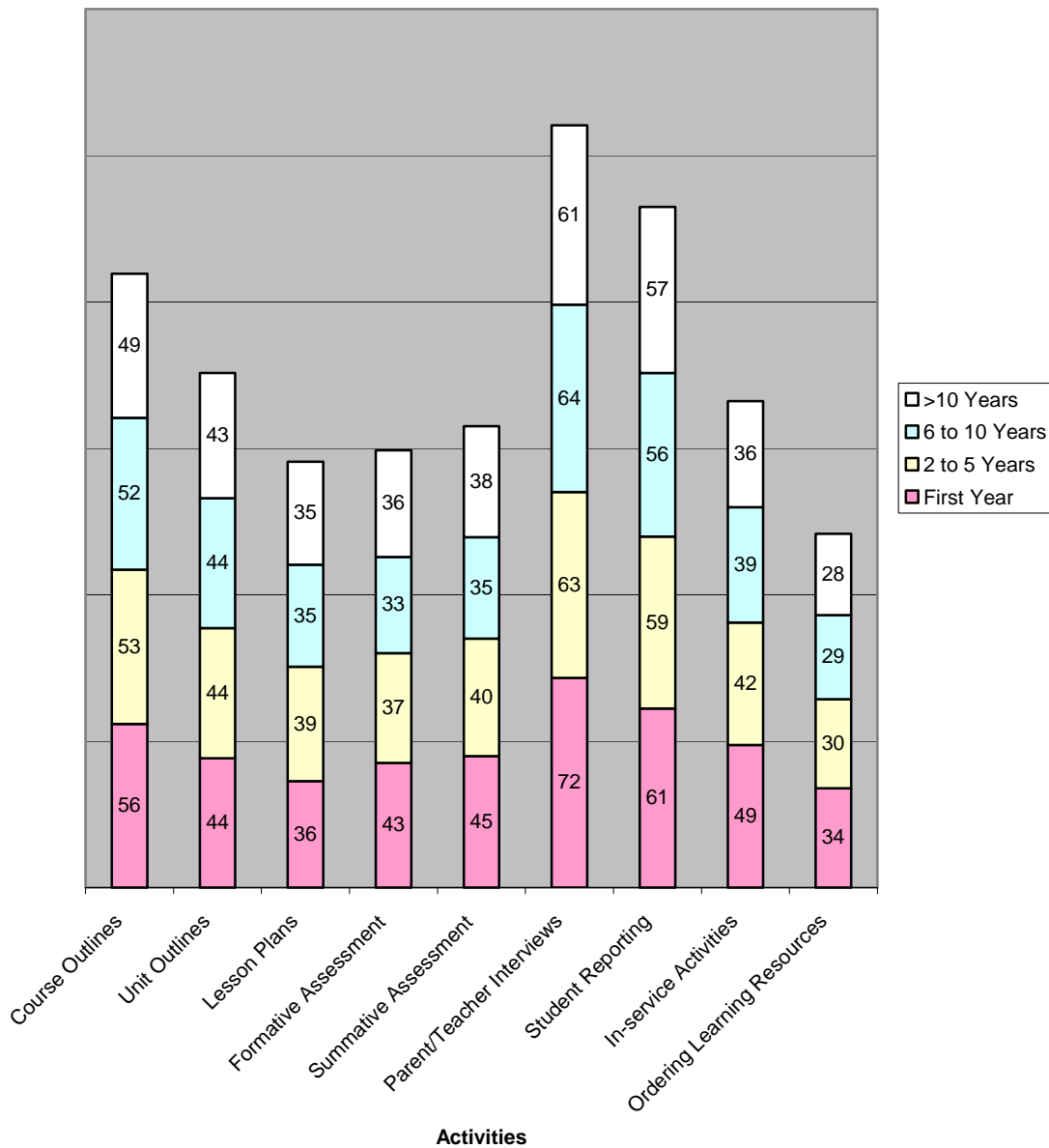


Figure 15: PLO Use by Teaching Grade Level

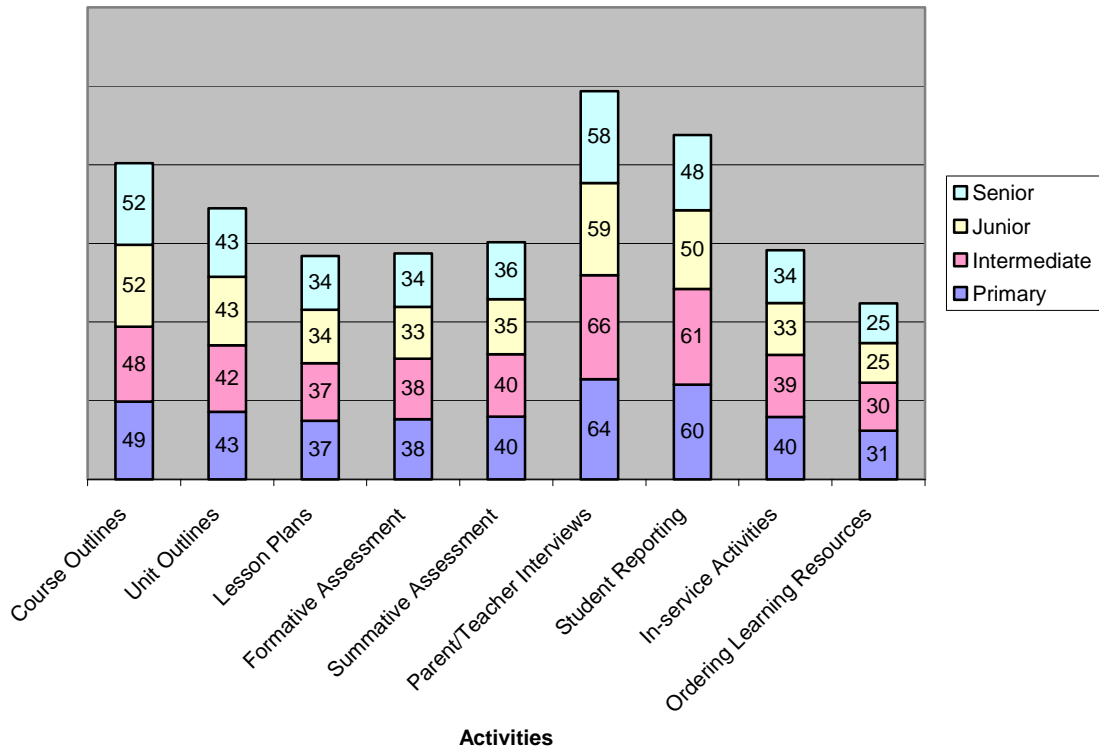
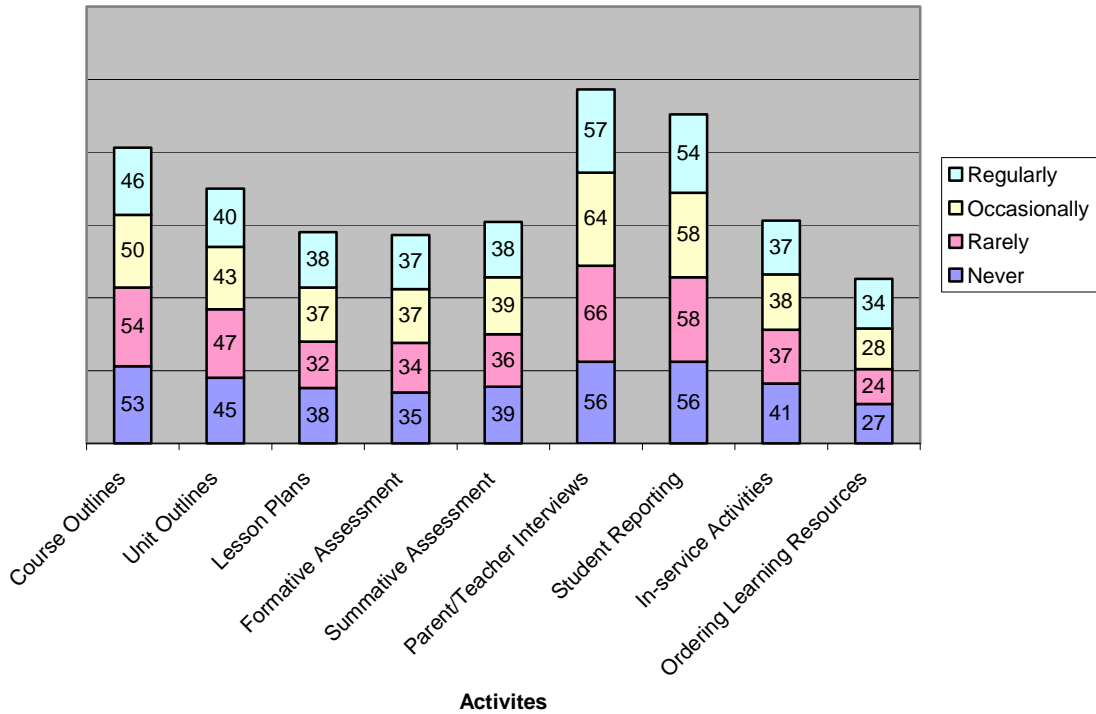


Figure 16: PLO Use by IRP Use



The most commonly reported uses of prescribed learning outcomes are:

- Parent Teacher Interviews (on average 62% of respondents);
- Student Reporting (on average 57% of respondents);
- Course Outlines (on average 50% of respondents);
- Unit Outlines (on average 43% of respondents); and,

Interestingly, those teachers who reported that they never used the IRP, followed the same trends as those teachers who indicated they referred to the IRP one or more times while teaching a course. In fact, the percentage values for this sub-group correspond almost exactly with those of the rest of the respondents.

Suggested Instructional Strategies (SIS):

Figures 17, 18, & 19 below show the results of this question relative to the suggested instructional strategies. Values in each bar graph represent percentages of each sub-group (by teaching experience, teaching grade level, and IRP use) that indicated that they use SIS for the stated teaching activities.

Figure 17: SIS by Teaching Experience

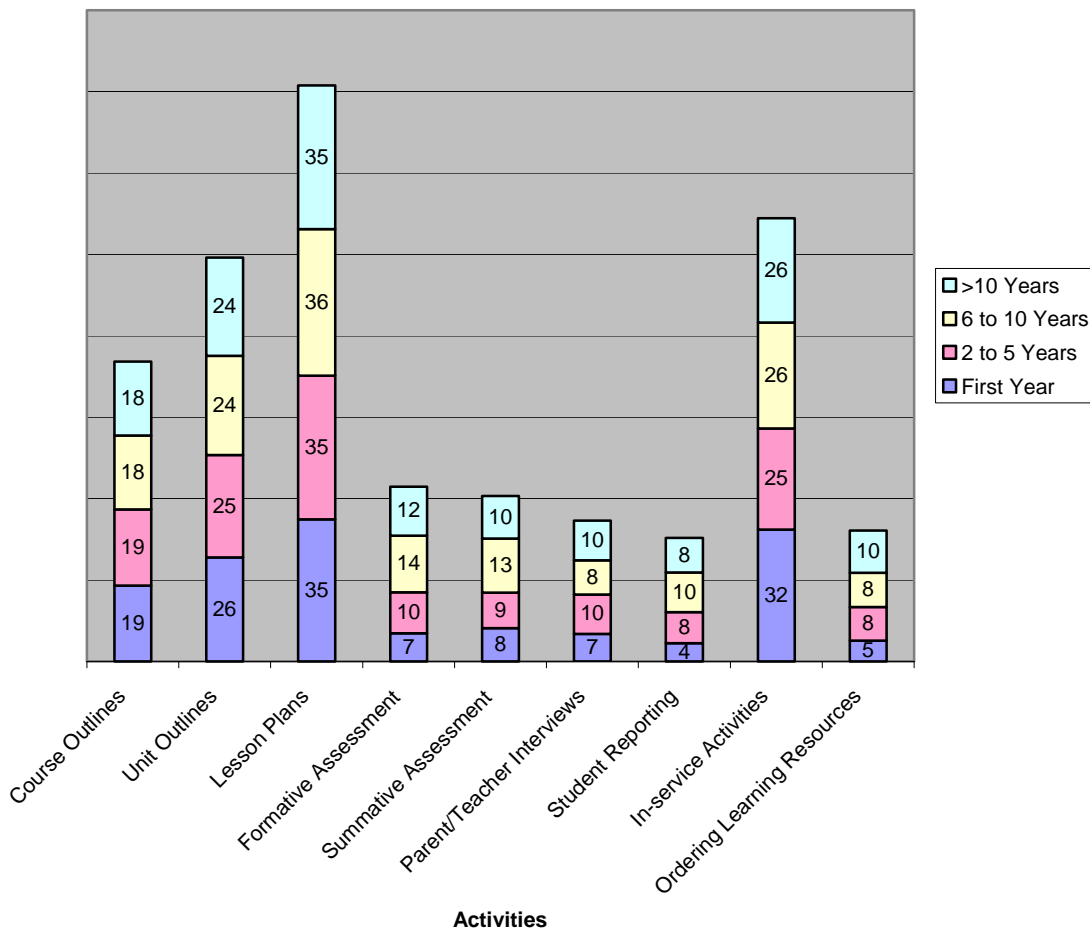


Figure 18: SIS by Teaching Grade Level

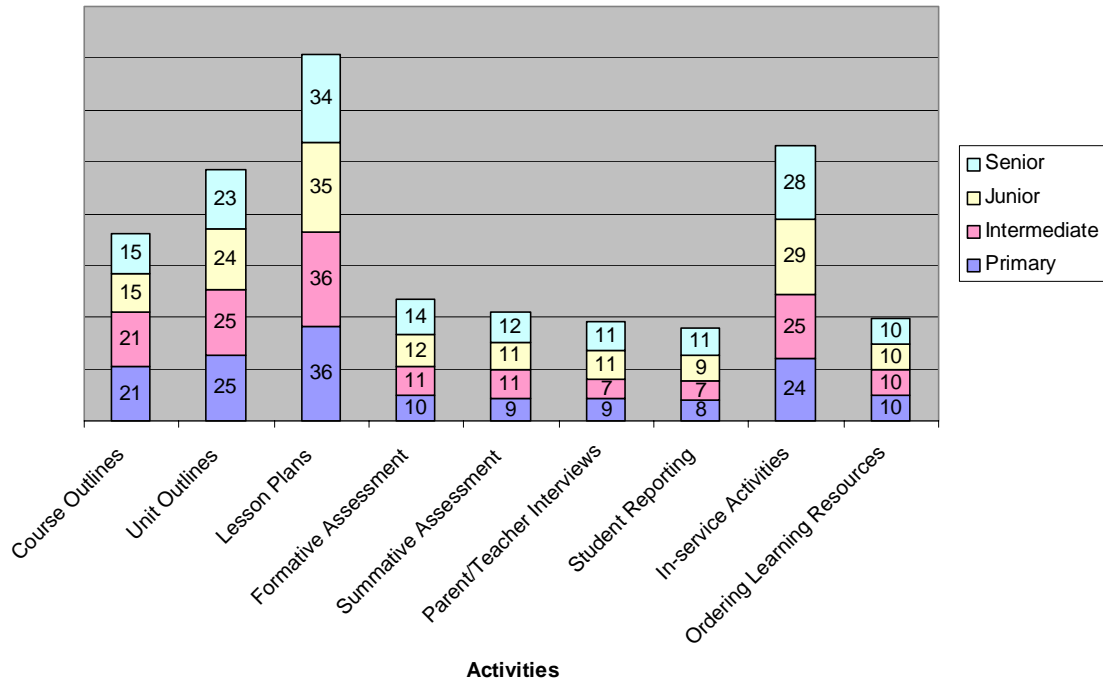
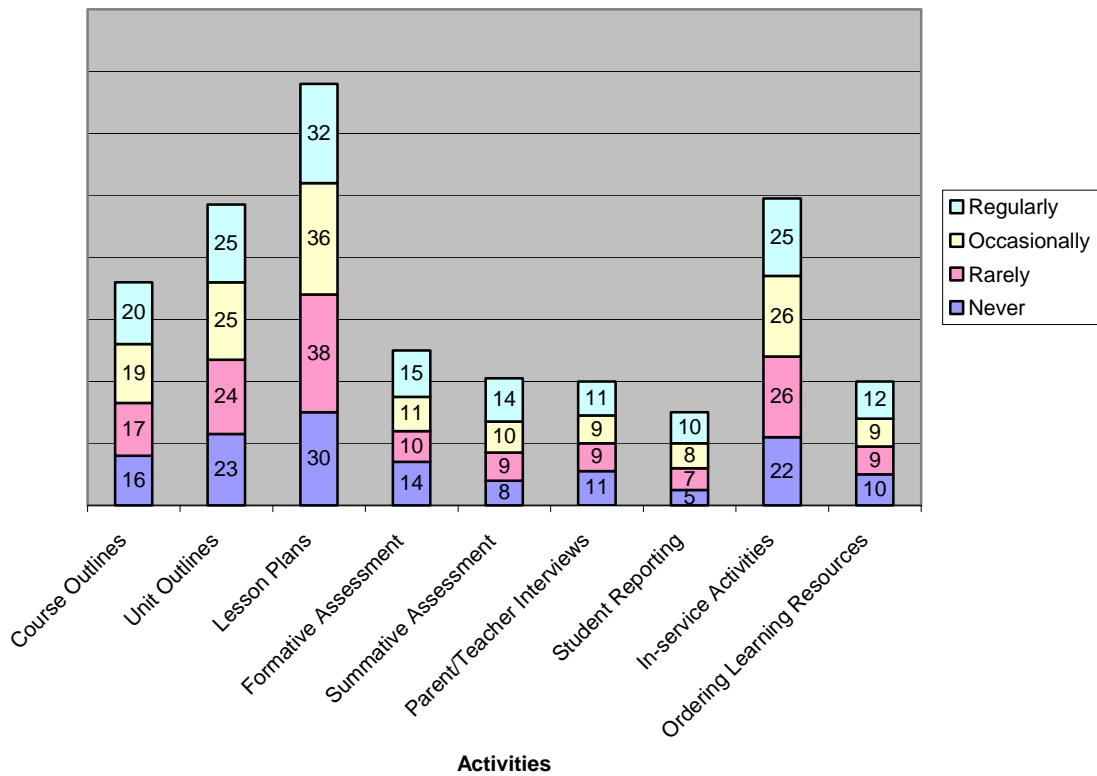


Figure 19: SIS by IRP Use



The most commonly reported uses of suggested instructional strategies are:

- Lesson Plan Development (on average 35% of respondents);
- In-service Activities (on average 26% of respondents); and,
- Unit Outline Development (on average 24% of respondents);

First-year teachers reported using the SIS for in-service more often than teachers with two or more years of experience. Regardless of whether the data is organized by teaching experience, teaching grade level, or IRP use, respondents reported using the SIS for lesson planning equally (~35% of respondents).

Suggested Assessment Strategies (SAS):

Figures 20, 21, & 22 below show the results of this question relative to the suggested assessment strategies. Values in each bar graph represent percentages of each sub-group (by teaching experience, teaching grade level, and IRP use) that indicated that they use SAS for the stated teaching activities.

Figure 20: SAS by Teaching Experience

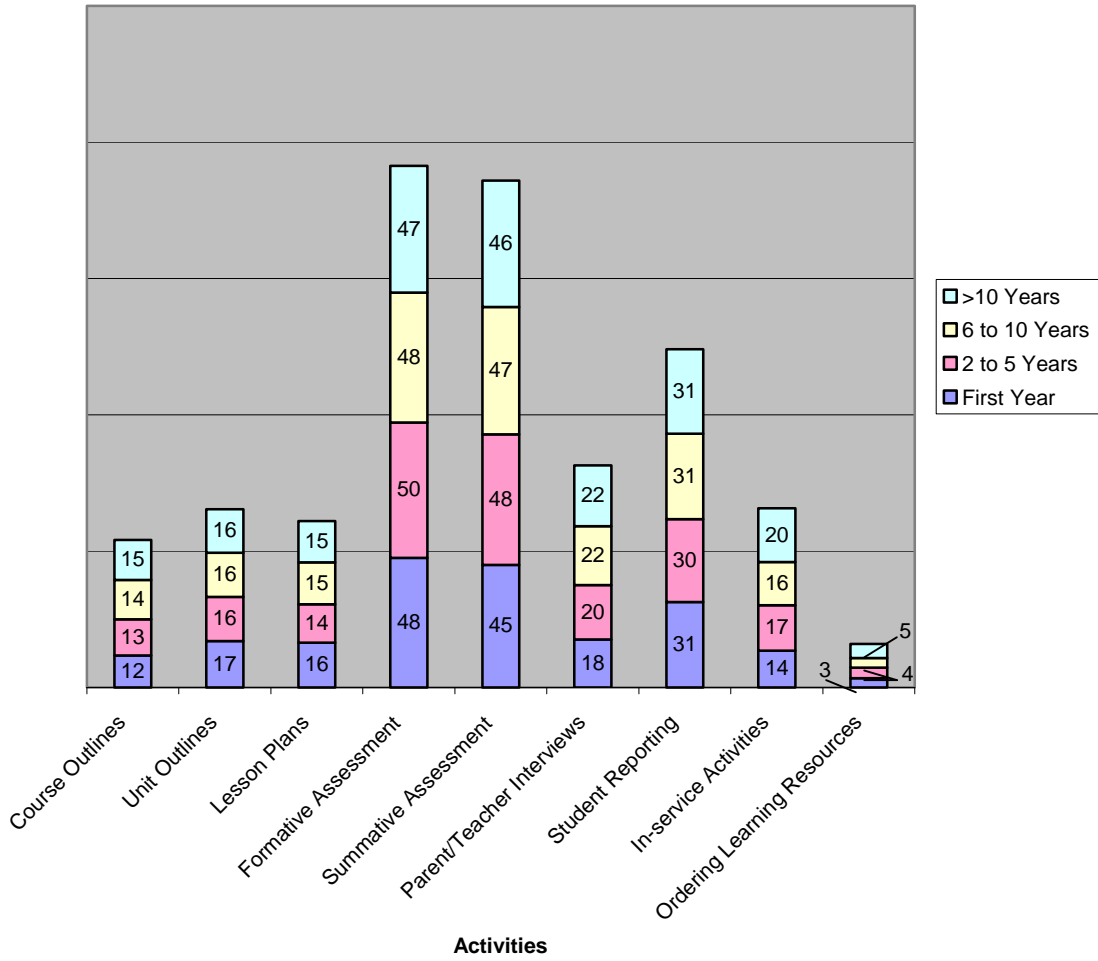


Figure 21: SAS by Teaching Grade Level

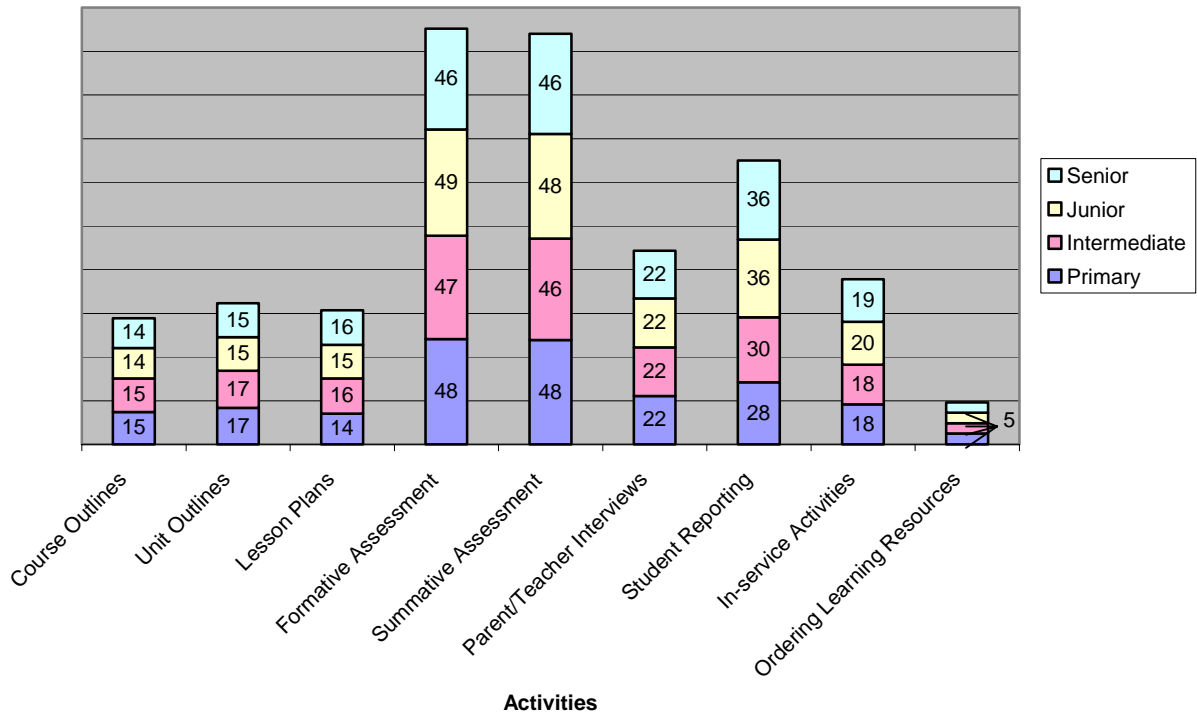
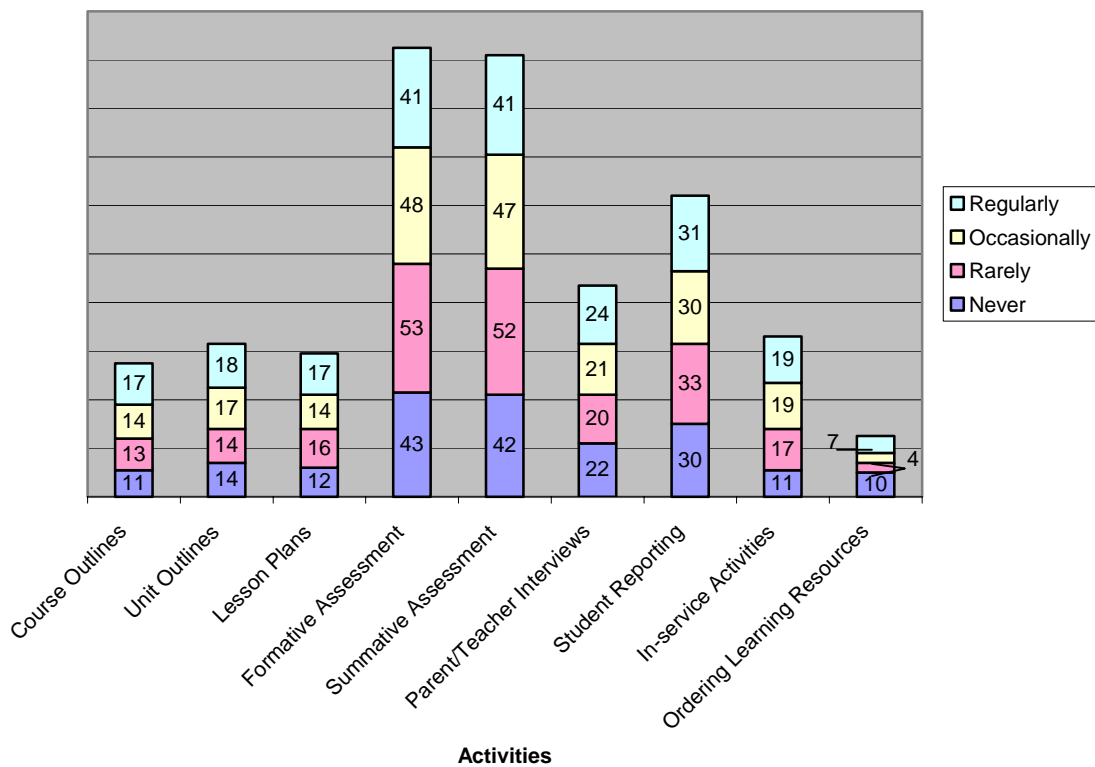


Figure 22: SAS by IRP Use



The most commonly reported uses of suggested instructional strategies are:

- Formative Assessment (on average 47% of respondents);
- Summative Assessment (on average 47% of respondents); and,
- Student Reporting (on average 31% of respondents);

In all cases there was general agreement between sub-categories of respondents (teaching experience, teaching grade level, and IRP use) for the use of suggested assessment strategies for each activity.

Recommended Learning Resources:

Figures 23, 24, & 25 below show the results of this question relative to the recommended learning resources. Values in each bar graph represent percentages of each sub-group (by teaching experience, teaching grade level, and IRP use) that indicated that they use RLR for the stated teaching activities.

Figure 23: RLR by Teaching Experience

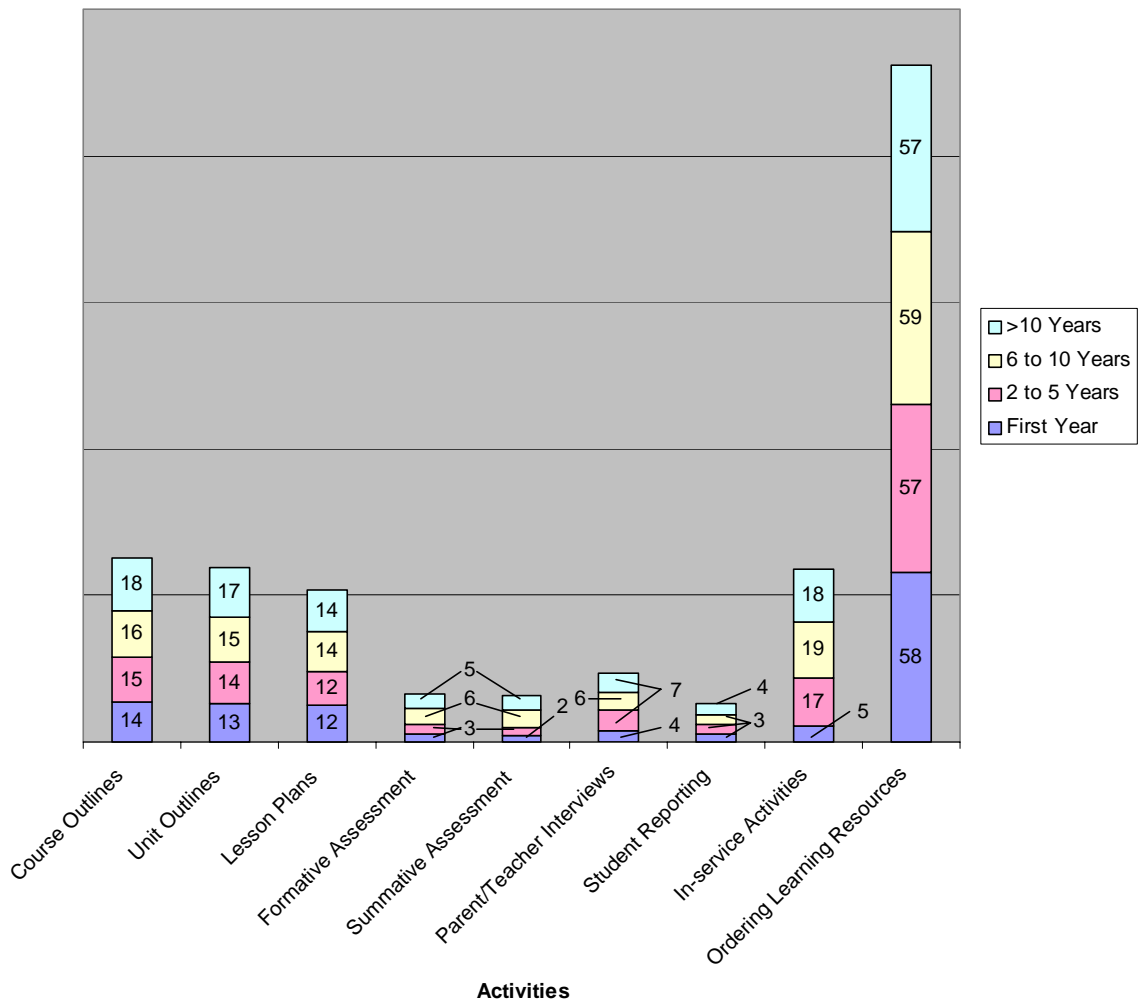


Figure 24: RLR by Teaching Grade Level

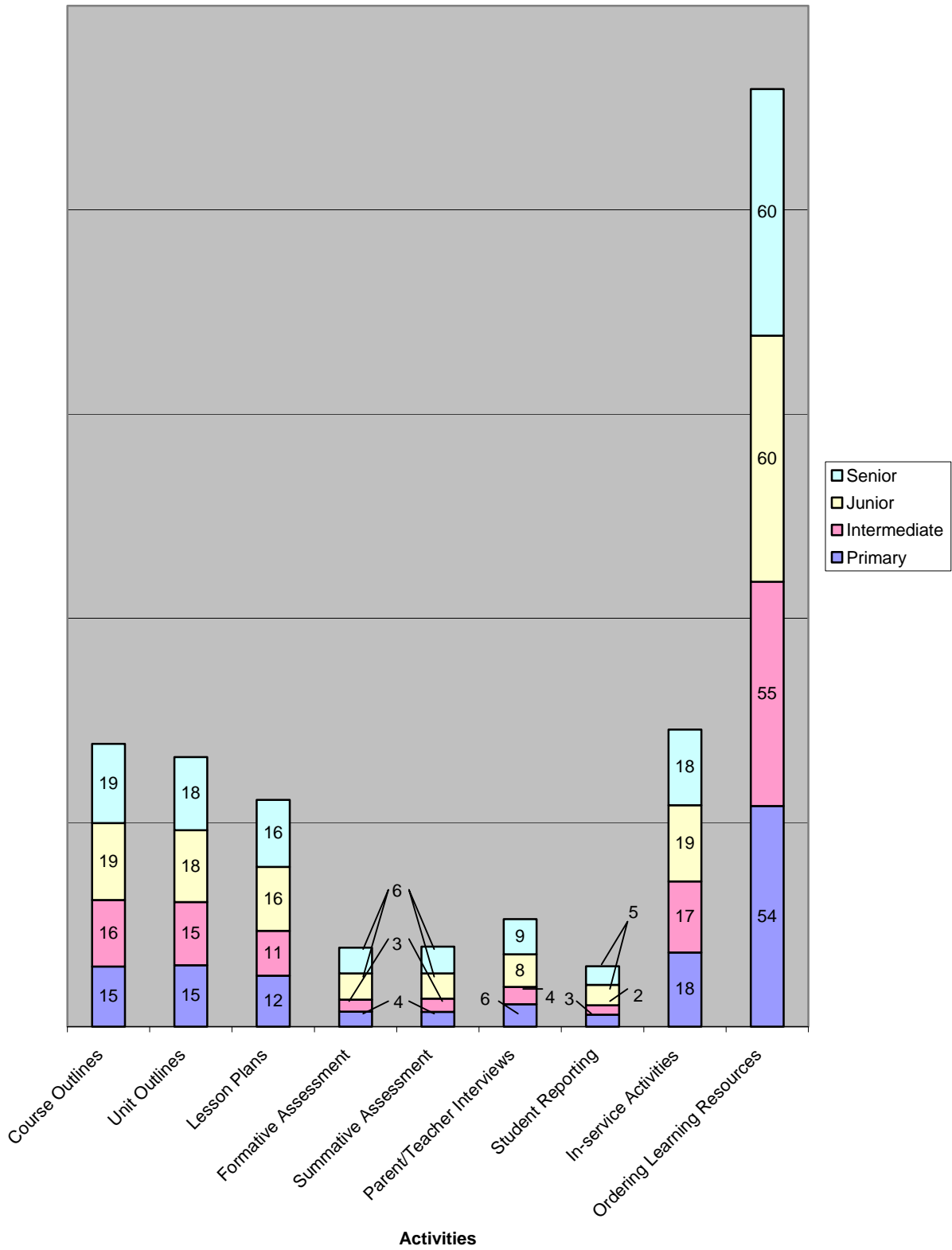
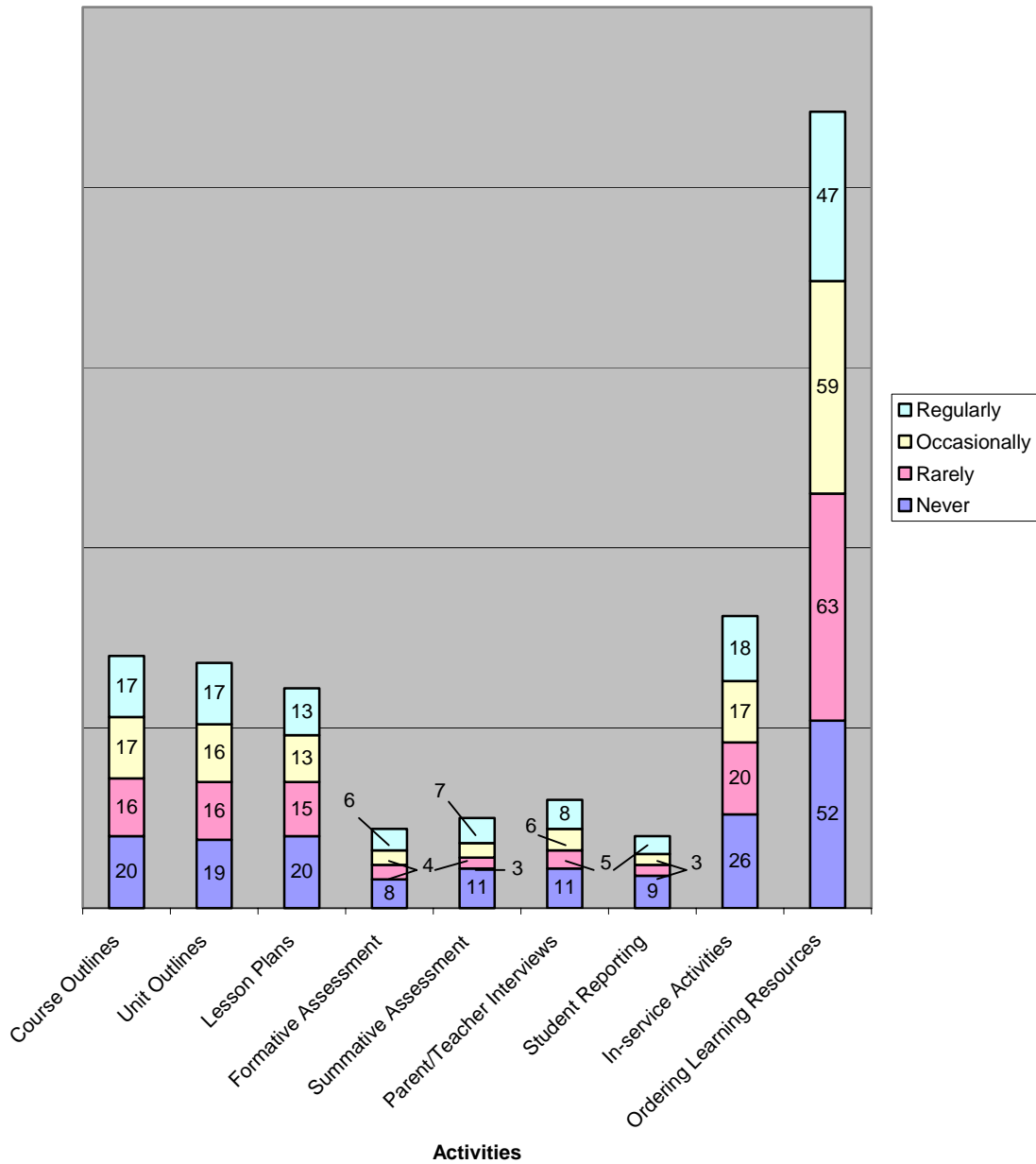


Figure 25: RLR by IRP Use



The most commonly reported uses of recommended learning resources are:

- Ordering Learning Resources (on average 57% of respondents); and,
- In-service Activities (on average 18% of respondents).

In all cases there was general agreement between sub-categories of respondents (teaching experience, teaching grade level, and IRP use) for the use of suggested assessment strategies for each activity

General Comments

All respondents identified a number of general issues that are beyond the present mandate of the Achievement Standards Branch, including:

- Money for learning resources;
- Timetabling of classes;
- Implementation and in-service support; and,
- Class size.

These issues are not reflected in the comments below although they are common themes in the responses.

Another issue is the difficulty with information dissemination. Many respondents asked for information or policies that are already posted on the Web or have been communicated to the field in a variety of ways (e.g., via letter, ministry website, EdInfo).

The final issue not addressed in the themes below is that of “venting.” Many comments, especially in the “2 - 5 years” and “more than 10 years” category contained comments indicating a feeling that the ministry was out of touch. A number of teachers felt “astonished and appalled at the absolute lack of concern for the public education system”.

General Comments by First Year Teachers:

- Comments such as, “Samples of student work, assessment items and assessment plans by unit would be really useful. Especially samples of student work” reinforce the value of the performance standards and the desire of teachers to have more information on assessment. One teacher indicated that, “IRPs are most effective if combined with performance standards.”
- One educator indicated that, “current IRPs are written as though all teachers are experts in these areas.” As a result the teacher felt that “Amorphous, general, broad, IRPs are of little use to people who are not schooled in the area that they are teaching.” This points to a need for the IRPs to serve as a form of an “in-service package” for teachers. One other teacher echoed this point by requesting a section on the “theory behind the development of rubrics and other assessment.”
- Several teachers indicated a need to make sure that IRPs were up-to-date. This is particularly the case in terms of resources.

General Comments by Teachers With 2 to 5 Years Experience

- Many teachers commented that the “IRPs are over-whelming and non-specific” and contain “too much information to synthesize.” As a result there were a large number of comments suggesting that, “BC IRPS are too general” and “must be radically simplified.” One response typifies the others: “Overall I believe the IRPs are a great tool for teachers when planning lessons. I do, however, find them a little too general and would appreciate them to be a little more specific in regards to the widely held

expectations for students in their age range” and suggests that the size is not so much the problem as the organization of the content and the need for classroom friendly material.

- Many teachers asked for more instructional and assessment strategies, “many more suggested teaching strategies for most or all of the PLOs, together with suggested assessment strategies.”
- There were a number of teachers that said they “prefer if each IRP was broken down in to each specific grade.”
- Several teachers indicated a comfort level with the IRP and did not want to see them changed again.

General Comments by Teachers With 6 to 10 Years Experience

- Overall, teachers indicated that they found the IRPs “helpful.” Several indicated that they use them for planning and reporting. One teacher indicated a reliance on the “IRPs for all lesson plans as there are often few resources that follow the curriculum and therefore the teacher has to make it up based on the IRP.” Another respondent indicated that the “IRP gave me hope and light.” The IRP was also cited as “fundamental to me when teaching student teachers how to organize their lessons.” At the same time many comments indicated that the “IRPs are too cumbersome as is” and need to be “clear and concise.”
- Issues related to understanding the PLOs in the IRP were evident in the responses. While one teacher stated, “If I had not read the information given [instructional strategies and assessment strategies] I may not have [read] the IRPs properly at all”. Another said, “A single statement in a learning outcome could refer to a very wide range of different degrees of depth and/or difficulty. This limits their usefulness in defining course expectations ... PLOs could encourage a ‘plug and chug’ rather than understanding – based approach, and good examples of assessment and student work needed to offset this.”
- Calls were also made for specificity, “assessment or activities must use specific examples – of teachers and students to make them less wishy-washy and applicable.” One other teacher stated, “I would love to have actual lesson plans with samples related to outcomes.”
- Several calls were made to make the IRPs and their content more accessible through presentation in a variety of formats. For example, “In my opinion the IRPs would be more valuable to me if they were packaged for each grade level.” “I have tried repeatedly, to no avail, to cut and paste grade level IRPs off the Internet. As with the IRP packages it is all or nothing”, “It would be neat if the ministry recognized that middle schools are common in BC and that resources, including IRPs, were organized to support all of us” and “when asked to provide course outlines we are asked to list PLOs ... it would be nice to see a universal code.”

General Comments by Teachers With More than 10 Years Experience

- Even more prevalent is the call for a revision of the IRP to allow for greater flexibility and more specific information.
- The most common comment from this group of educators was that “A simplified, concise presentation would be effective and more helpful.” At the same time teachers were asking the ministry to “cut down the number of learning outcomes”, “see illustrative examples relevant to instructional strategies on the same paper or at least the next page as immediate pictorial evidence of how to teach the outcome” and “information on assessment in terms of what is specifically expected at each grade level.”
- Several teachers said, “Don’t pull the IRPs – they are useful documents!” while others “liked the old format of the curriculum guide (pre-1992).” There were many comments regarding the ministry wasting time on these surveys and asking the ministry to “listen to teachers when you consult with them in the future.”
- One comment of note was “I am terrified that our ministry is going towards standardized tests with the focus of “you” having lots of data and no consideration of learning as the focus. Children are people not objects to rate and force into a mould. Why should all children be at the same performance level when they are individuals? Your thinking is backwards.”

General Comments by Primary, Intermediate, Junior, & Senior Teachers

All teachers had essentially the same general comments to make. These include:

- IRPs are “too broad and general. Too vague. Especially Language Arts. More specific. Not good to have to read instruction to understand PLO.”
- Maintain IRP but enhance. No new system.
- Hard copy better and more practical than download or CD. CD not user friendly. Impossible to cut and paste.
- More in-service when IRP released.
- One package for each grade level
- More teaching material
- Old scope and sequence more useful
- Too many PLOs
- More detailed outline of what is expected
- More practical assessment tools and methods.
- Not enough information about level of learning per grade level (achievement standards)
- Math and Science IRP should be a model
- Address split / multi-grade classes
- Instructional strategies too vague to be useful
- More grade level information. PLOS reorganized by grade level
- Make IRPs more practical documents for teaching. User friendly.

Conclusions

Even though respondents to this survey are a self-selected group, the results can be considered as reasonably representative of the teaching population in British Columbia. The approximate 3,000 respondents represent more than 7% of the teaching population of BC. When this is combined with the fact that teachers from all areas of the province (from public, independent and band schools) responded to the survey, it is fair to say that the survey results are representative of B.C. teachers.

A number of conclusions can be drawn relative to the original survey questions:

1. Do teachers use their IRPs? How often?

The unequivocal response is, yes. Less than four percent of respondents indicated that they “never” use an IRP. Subsequent responses from this group suggest that even this small percentage refer to the IRP at least once before teaching a course/grade. Ninety-six percent of respondents reported that they refer to their IRPs at least once while teaching a course while 64% of respondents reported that they used their IRPs two or more times while teaching a course.

2. To assist me in assessing students’ achievement, I would like to have...

The response to this question was quite clear. Respondents would like the following types of support (in order of decreasing preference) in assessing their students’ achievement of the province’s content standards:

- Specific description(s) as to how well a student is expected to perform;
- Information on subject-specific assessment strategies and methodologies;
- Specific assessment tools such as black-line master scoring guides, rating scales, and checklist;
- Sample assessment items (e.g., objective test questions, performance-based tasks, etc.);
- Samples of actual student work; and,
- Sample assessment plans by unit or by course.

3. How useful do teachers rate the various components of the IRP?

Respondents rated the prescribed learning outcomes as the most useful of the four IRP components. A number of comments suggest that the IRP components would be more useful to teachers if:

- The learning outcomes were fewer in number and more specific in nature;
- The instructional and assessment strategies were more concrete, specific and of practical use to teachers; and,
- The recommended learning resources were more current and affordable.

4. *Which, if any, of the four components of the IRP do teachers use in their teaching?*

Respondents were consistent in the various IRP components they used in their day-to-day teaching. These include (in decreasing use of component):

- Prescribed Learning Outcomes - Used for parent/teacher interviews, student reporting, and developing course and unit outlines;
- Suggested Instructional Strategies - Used for developing lesson plans, in-service activities, and developing unit plans;
- Suggested Assessment Strategies - Used for formative and summative assessment as well as student reporting; and,
- Recommended Learning Resources - Used for ordering learning resources.

It is apparent that BC teachers are using their IRPs, but it is also clear that a number of changes to the IRP would make them more functional. These functional changes can be generalized as follows:

1. Reduce the number of prescribed learning outcomes while at the same time making them more specific (i.e. reduce the overall amount of “content” in each course/grade level);
2. Provide more subject and grade-specific support material for both instruction and assessment; and,
3. Streamline the entire IRP document and make available a usable on-line/CD version that makes it easier for teachers to use the IRP as a planning tool.

Appendix A: Assessment and Integrated Resource Package Survey

The following survey is being conducted to:

- Determine teachers' preferences for the type and presentation format of classroom assessment information to be included in future Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs).
- Consult with teachers concerning the IRP format to identify possible modifications to improve its usability.

This survey is also available online at:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/branches/pser/whatsnew.htm>.

Please mail or fax to: Assessment Standards Branch
 Ministry of Education
 P.O. Box 9152, Station P.G.
 Victoria, BC, V8W 9H1
 Fax: (250) 387-1527

School District No. _____ **-OR-** *Check if Independent or Band School* _____

Please complete the following by checking (√) the appropriate box:

Which best describes you? (Check Only One Box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Classroom Generalist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Assistance/Resource Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject Specialist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal/Vice Principal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultant/District Helping Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Counselor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher On Call	<input type="checkbox"/>	District Administrator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher Librarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____

C. What grade levels do you teach? (Check All That Apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary (K-3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Junior (8-10)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate (4-7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior (11-12)

D. What will be your teaching experience as of June 2002?

<input type="checkbox"/>	My first year	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 to 10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than 10 years

E. How often do you refer to an Integrated Resource Package (IRP) in your teaching?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occasionally – several times a course (e.g., monthly)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rarely – once or twice a course	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regularly – on an ongoing basis (e.g., daily or weekly)

1. Please respond to the following statements by checking (✓) the appropriate box:

<i>To assist me in assessing students' achievement, I would like to have...</i>	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Specific description(s) as to how well a student is expected to perform.					
b. Information on subject-specific assessment strategies and methodologies.					
c. Information on how to assess cross-curricular learning outcomes.					
d. Information on <u>how to develop</u> rubrics and rating scales for measuring student performance.					
e. <u>Specific assessment tools</u> such as black line master scoring guides, rating scales, and checklists.					
f. Samples of actual student work.					
g. A <u>comprehensive test bank</u> of questions correlated to grade and subject specific learning outcomes.					
h. <u>Sample assessment items</u> (e.g., objective test questions, performance-based tasks, etc.)					
i. Sample assessment plans by unit or by course.					
j. Tables of specifications (for formative & summative assessment)					

2. Please indicate which IRP(s) you are thinking of when you answer questions 3 & 4 (Identify up to three IRPs):

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. Please indicate your rating of the IRP components listed below by circling *Not Useful*, *Somewhat Useful*, or *Very Useful*. Please explain your choice. (Attach additional pages if required)

a. Prescribed Learning Outcomes: Not Useful Somewhat Useful Useful Very Useful

These are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do in each grade and subject.

b. Suggested Instructional Strategies: Not Useful Somewhat Useful Useful Very Useful

These are techniques, activities, and methods that can be employed to meet diverse student needs and to deliver the prescribed curriculum.

c. Suggested Assessment Strategies: Not Useful Somewhat Useful Useful Very Useful

These include a variety of ways to gather information about student performance.

d. Recommended Learning Resources: Not Useful Somewhat Useful Useful Very Useful

These are a compilation of provincially reviewed and recommended learning resources that support the prescribed learning outcomes.

4. Which, if any, of the four components of the IRP do you use for the following activities (*check all that apply*):

Activity	Prescribed Learning Outcomes	Suggested Instructional Strategies	Suggested Assessment Strategies	Recommended Learning Resources
a. Developing Course Outlines				
b. Developing Unit Outlines				
c. Developing Daily Lesson Plans				
d. Developing Formative Assessments				
e. Developing Summative Assessments				
f. Parent/Teacher Interviews				
g. Student Reporting				
h. In-service Activities				
i. Ordering Learning Resources				
j. Other (Provide Details Below)				

5. Please provide other comments in the space provided (attach additional paper if desired).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT! PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY JUNE 28, 2002