

Social Studies Teachers' Sustained, Collaborative Professional Development Centered Round Innovative Curriculum Materials

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Abstract : Here the author synthesizes findings and implications from two research studies that comprise a continuing line of inquiry into the potential of an innovative professional development program to help in-service teachers understand and implement a complex model of social studies instruction. The paper specifically explores the question: To what degree can a collaborative professional development program centered around innovative curriculum materials help social studies teachers understand and implement a powerful social studies approach? Findings suggest the teachers increasingly incorporated substantive thinking (i.e., second-order historical domain knowledge) into their respective practice and they facilitated students' use of historical photographs as evidence to begin to answer a compelling question. The teachers also began to effectively support students' abilities to make claims about the past. Implications include the foregrounding of high-quality questions during planning and the need for explicit guidance in the form of structures and procedures (i.e., scaffolds) to help teachers systematically review students' work products. The work shared here may contribute to scholarship that posits explanations for why teacher-support is routinely ineffectual and suggests ways to provide substantive collaborative support for in-service social studies teachers.

Keywords : educative curriculum, social studies, professional development, lesson study

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