Practices of Self-Directed Professional Development of Teachers in South African Public Schools

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Abstract : This research study is an exploration of the self-directed professional development of teachers who teach in public schools in an era of democracy and educational change in South Africa. Amidst an ever-changing educational system, the teachers in this study position themselves as self-directed teacher-learners where they adopt particular learning practices which enable change within the broader discourses of public schooling. Life-story interviews were used to enter into the private and public spaces of five teachers which offer glimpses of how particular systems shaped their identities, and how the meanings of self-directed teacher-learner shaped their learning practices. Through the Multidimensional framework of analysis and interpretation the teachers' stories were analysed through three lenses: restorying the field texts - the self through story; the teacher-learner in relation to social contexts, and practices of self-directed learning.This study shows that as teacher-learners learn for change through self-directed learning practices, they develop their agency as transformative intellectuals, which is necessary for the reworking of South African public schools.
Keywords : professional development, professionality, professionalism, self-directed learning
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