Evaluating Impact of Teacher Professional Development Program on Students' Learning

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Abstract : This study attempted to investigate the connection between teacher professional development program and students' Learning. This study took Readers' Theater Teaching Program (RTTP) for professional development as an example to inquiry how participants apply their new knowledge and skills learned from RTTP to their teaching practice and how the impact influence students learning. The goals of the RTTP included: 1) to enhance teachers RT content knowledge; 2) to implement RT instruction in teachers' classrooms in response to their professional development. 2) to improve students' ability of reading fluency in professional development teachers' classrooms. This study was a two-year project. The researchers applied mixed methods to conduct this study including qualitative inquiry and one-group pretest-posttest experimental design. In the first year, this study focused on designing and implementing RTTP and evaluating participants' satisfaction of RTTP, what they learned and how they applied it to design their English reading curriculum. In the second year, the study adopted quasi-experimental design approach and evaluated how participants RT instruction influenced their students' learning, including English knowledge, skill, and attitudes. The participants in this study composed two junior high school English teachers and their students. Data were collected from a number of different sources including teaching observation, semi-structured interviews, teaching diary, teachers' professional development portfolio, Pre/post RT content knowledge tests, teacher survey, and students' reading fluency tests. To analyze the data, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis were used. Qualitative data analysis included three stages: organizing data, coding data, and analyzing and interpreting data. Quantitative data analysis included descriptive analysis. The results indicated that average percentage of correct on pre-tests in RT content knowledge assessment was 40.75% with two teachers ranging in prior knowledge from 35% to 46% in specific RT content. Post-test RT content scores ranged from 70% to 82% correct with an average score of 76.50%. That gives teachers an average gain of 35.75% in overall content knowledge as measured by these pre/post exams. Teachers' pre-test scores were lowest in script writing and highest in performing. Script writing was also the content area that showed the highest gains in content knowledge. Moreover, participants hold a positive attitude toward RTTP. They recommended that the approach of professional learning community, which was applied in RTTP was benefit to their professional development. Participants also applied the new skills and knowledge which they learned from RTTP to their practices. The evidences from this study indicated that RT English instruction significantly influenced students' reading fluency and classroom climate. The result indicated that all of the experimental group students had a big progress in reading fluency after RT instruction. The study also found out several obstacles. Suggestions were also made.

Keywords : teacher's professional development, program evaluation, readers' theater, english reading instruction, english reading fluency