

## Instructional Coaches' Perceptions of Professional Development: An Exploration of the School-Based Support Program

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**Abstract :** This article examines the development of a professional development (PD) model for educator growth and learning that is embedded into the school context. The School based Support Program (SBSP), designed for the Qatari context, targets the practices, knowledge, and skills of both school leadership and teachers in an attempt to improve students' learning outcomes. Key aspects of the model include the development of learning communities among teachers, strong leadership that supports school improvement activities, and the use of research-based PD to improve teacher practices and student achievement. This paper further presents the results of a qualitative study examining the perceptions of nineteen instructional coaches about the strengths of the PD program, the challenges they face in their day-to-day implementation of the program, and their suggestions for the betterment of the program's implementation and outcomes. Data were collected from the instructional coaches through open-ended surveys followed by focus group interviews. The instructional coaches reported several strengths, which were compatible with the literature on effective PD. However, the challenges they faced were deeply rooted within the structure of the program, in addition to external factors operating at the school and Ministry of Education levels. Thus, a general consensus on the way the program should ultimately develop was reached.

**Keywords :** situated professional development, school reform, instructional coach, school based support program

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