Preservice EFL Teachers in a Blended Professional Development Program: Learning to Teach Speech Acts

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Abstract : This study examines the effectiveness of a blended professional development program on preservice EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers' learning to teach speech acts with the advent of Information and Communication Technology, researchers and scholars underscore the significance of integrating online and face-to-face learning opportunities in the teacher education field. Yet, a paucity of evidence has been documented to investigate the extent to which such a blended professional learning model may impact real classroom practice and student learning outcome. This yearlong project involves various stakeholders, including 25 preservice teachers, 5 English professionals, and 45 secondary school students. Multiple data sources collected are surveys, interviews, reflection journals, online discussion messages, artifacts, and discourse completion tests. Relying on the theoretical lenses of Community of Inquiry, data analysis depicts the nature and process of preservice teachers' professional development in this blended learning community, which triggers and fosters both face-to-face and synchronous/asynchronous online interactions among preservice teachers and English professionals (i.e., university faculty and in-service teachers). Also included is the student learning outcome after preservice teachers put what they learn from the support community into instructional practice. Pedagogical implications and research suggestions are further provided based on the research findings and limitations.