

Situated Professional Development: Examining Strengths, Challenges, and Ways Forward

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Abstract : The study examined the influence of a situated professional development program (PD) aimed at enhancing English language teachers' knowledge and skills and improving their instructional practices. The PD model under examination was developed upon sound theoretical underpinnings, taking into consideration research-based principles of effective PD. However, the implementation of the PD model within several school contexts required further investigation from the perspectives of the teachers, who were receiving the PD activities, and the instructional coaches, who were providing them. The paper, thus, presents the results of a qualitative study examining the perceptions of seventeen English language teachers and nineteen instructional coaches about the strengths of the PD program, the challenges they faced in the implementation of the program, and their suggestions for the improvement of the program's implementation and outcomes. Comparisons were further made between the two groups of participants to uncover agreements and contradictions in their perceptions. Data were collected from the teachers through in-depth interviews and observations, while the data collected from the instructional coaches were open-ended surveys followed by focus group interviews. The findings of the study confirm the necessity of structuring PD activities around sound theoretical underpinnings. However, practical considerations specific to the contexts where the PD activities take place should be considered when evaluating the PD's effectiveness. Finally, the study provides several recommendations for maximizing the influence of the PD program on teachers' practices and beliefs.

Keywords : English language teachers, situated professional development, teacher beliefs, teacher practices

Conference Title : ICTEA 2018 : International Conference on Teacher Education and Administration

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : April 12-13, 2018