

An alternative model for professional development: Investigations into effective collaboration.

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Abstract

Historically, teacher professional development has taken place in isolation and has been dependent upon input from outside “experts” (Sandholtz, A companion of direct and indirect professional development activities, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada, 1999). As an alternative, collaborative action research actively involves teachers in professional reflection, validates educators as producers of knowledge, and recognizes their role in professional development and decision making. The value of teacher research is well documented (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, Inside outside: teacher research and knowledge, Teachers College Press, New York, 1993) but unless deliberate attempts to share findings are established, the products of teacher research often remain within individual classrooms. Strategies to develop collaborative research capabilities are needed.

While teacher collaboration may take many forms, action research teaming has become the centerpiece of one urban teacher preparation program. This paper presents quantitative and qualitative data from a study involving a university, school districts, and teacher candidates. Preserviceâ€“in-service dyads were taught how to use action research to examine, analyze, and reflect upon their teaching. Results indicate general acceptance by both new and experienced teachers, with developmental differences influencing the process.



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Keywords

Teacher research; Action research; Teacher collaboration

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