Elementary teachers’ views of their science professional development attendance: An expectancy-value approach

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More Detail

Abstract

This study explored primarily the elementary teachers’ motivations and expectations for engagement in a science professional development. Participants (N=20) were elementary teachers in two public schools from the United States and were enrolled in a yearlong science professional development; however, due to various factors teachers did not complete the professional development program. We investigated various motivational aspects related to teachers’ professional experiences as well as their views about the program. Study results showed that teachers’ motivations for this professional development program were strongly influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs about science teaching, their beliefs about what effective teaching means and the types of support provided to teachers by their schools to engage in such program. Additional study results showed that teachers from different grade levels perceived differently the effectiveness of their professional development program involvement because of the relevance (or lack of relevance) of the science content presented in the program relative to their grade level. Implications for classroom practice and future research are discussed in this study along with findings.

Keywords

teacher education  teacher development  motivation  beliefs  values  teaching  practices

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Teachers are presented with professional development opportunities covering varying topics throughout the course of each year. Great teachers recognize their weaknesses and attend professional development workshops/conferences to improve these areas. Many teachers commit a portion of their summer to attending professional development workshops/conferences. Workshops/conferences also provide teachers with invaluable networking opportunities that can further enhance their overall growth and improvement. Social Media. This professional development workshop will teach teachers how to foster a classroom community of readers and writers who use critical discussions, mentor texts, and mediation. Strategies to re-engage males at this level will also be shared. Literacy Retreat. This multi-day format retreat offers professional development for teachers who want to help students become better readers of both fiction and non-fiction. In addition, teachers will be taught to foster critical and creative thinking skills in students at various levels. The workshop offers a look into how teachers can create the global c Expectancy–value theory has been developed in many different fields including education, health, communications, marketing and economics. Although the model differs in its meaning and implications for each field, the general idea is that there are expectations as well as values or beliefs that affect subsequent behavior. John William Atkinson developed the expectancy–value theory in the 1950s and 1960s in an effort to understand the achievement motivation of individuals. In the 1980s, Jacquelynne Professional development in the form of a onetime event may not sustain or penetrate into the system. With the sit and get traditional approach to professional development, teachers change their practices individually, causing a varied approach that often does not have a ripple effect on the school structure itself. Best Practices in Professional Development. There is a paucity of research on what constitutes effective and meaningful professional development. Bull and Buechler (1997) and Desimone (2009) have outlined effective professional development qualities. These qualities include: (a) be