

Public Abstract

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Title:An Exploratory Study of Professional Development Experiences for New Middle School Science Teachers in a Suburban School District

This qualitative case study analyzed interview data for the perceived support of professional development provided to new science teachers by a large suburban school district. Given the high rate of attrition of new teachers, it is important to understand factors that can positively impact the professional growth of new teachers. Twelve new middle school teachers and 5 administrators were interviewed. Findings suggested the most useful adult learning occurred in the learning communities model of professional development. Adult learning that used direct lecture and little teacher collaboration was found to be the least effective. This study recommends that districts provide better training to leadership regarding the delivery of quality learning communities, improve mentor selection and training, and provide new teachers with more quality feedback. The roles of leadership and relationships were interpreted as the most influential variables regarding whether or not new middle school science teachers felt supported through district-sponsored training. Educational literature on adult learning theories and quality professional development support this study's findings and conclusions.