

Testing the “whole teacher” approach to professional development: A study of enhancing early childhood teachers’ technology proficiency ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

- Article in html ^[2]

- Journal homepage and index ^[3]

Abstract:

The contribution of early education to children's well-being and school success is widely recognized. Effective teachers are the most critical factor in the quality of a child's education. The key to sustaining teacher effectiveness and supporting continuous growth is high-quality professional development. Despite its critical importance, professional development for early childhood teachers is inconsistent and fragmented. The field of early education lacks a common conceptual framework to organize and integrate teacher development experiences. In this paper, the whole teacher development approach is proposed as an organizing framework. The approach is distinguished by its simultaneous focus on teacher attitudes, skills and knowledge, and practices. Also distinctive is its application of an integrated developmental framework that promotes teacher proficiency in a wide range of specific domains. To test the approach, a study of teachers' technology proficiency was carried out. The study analyzed relationships among teacher attitudes, skills, and practices, using data collected from teachers in the process of developing computer proficiency. Among teachers who participated in a technology program based on the whole teacher development approach, significant degrees of association among attitudes, skills, and practices were found. Further, program participants reported significantly higher levels of technology skill and classroom practice than nonparticipants. Distinctive features of the approach are compared to other professional development practices in early childhood education. Implications for conceptualizing and designing effective professional development programs for early childhood teachers are discussed.

Region: United States ^[4]

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