

Public Abstract

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Title:Stories of K-12 English Language Learner Teachers Developing Professionally Through Informal Collaboration Within Occupational Communities

English Language Learner (ELL) teachers are content-specific teachers who work with students who do not speak English. ELL teachers are taught how to teach the students to acquire the English language. ELL teachers work with all mainstream teachers to increase the chances of successful English proficiency in students within a timely manner. The purpose of this study was to provide insight on the informal collaboration that occurs among ELL teachers. Understanding how this unique population informally collaborates is important to administrators and ELL professional development initiators. Framed by the research setting, the problem, and purpose, the research question was: How do ELL teachers informally collaborate with their occupational communities?

This research was a phenomenological, qualitative study using interviews of ELL teachers, document collection, and literature reviews. The interviews were conducted with seven ELL teachers from a purposeful and snowball sampling within the predetermined geographical area. The documents were collected from public, state maintained internet sites. The data were then analyzed using open coding. The thematic data were then filtered through current and relevant literature reviews. Key findings of the study indicate common methods of informal collaboration, informal collaboration issues, and informal collaboration motivation. Meaning is made via metaphorical discussions. Further areas of research are indicated to include novice versus veteran teacher's informal collaboration efforts and quantitative research extension from the aforementioned themes.