

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:FS 2011

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:EdD

Title:Teachers Working Together: The Role of Professional Conference Attendance

The purpose of this study was to explore the connections to professional development, professional conferences, professional learning communities, benefits associated with conversing and collaborating with educators, and qualities of highly effective teachers. This study was designed to further the understanding of professional development practices and characteristics of highly qualified and highly effective teachers.

This descriptive study was primarily qualitative; however, some items from the online survey were quantitative in nature. Participants in the study provided information about their self perceived strengths as teachers. They answered questions about their use of information learned from the conference along with the effect the conference had on their teaching styles. Professional learning communities were investigated to determine if teachers had opportunities to converse and collaborate on information learned from the conference. Teachers' strengths were analyzed and compared to other research on highly effective and highly qualified teachers. The results of this survey supported other research on the benefits of collaboration and the skills of effective teachers. Implications of the research indicated a need for collaboration after attending professional development conferences to implement and sustain learning.