

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
EXPERIENCES FOR NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHERS IN A
SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This case study analyzes interview data for the perceived support of professional development provided to new science teachers by a large suburban school district. Twelve new middle school teachers and 5 administrators were interviewed. Findings suggest the most useful adult learning occurred in the learning communities model of professional development. Adult learning that uses direct lecture and little teacher collaboration was found to be the least effective. The 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 in whether or not new middle school science teachers felt they were supported through district-sponsored training. Educational literature on adult learning theories and quality professional development support this study's findings and conclusions.