

ABSTRACT

This qualitative action research study examined the experiences of teachers while involved in a professional learning community. The research process used a study group format as a professional development strategy that fostered the utilization of reflective teaching and thinking as a tool to engage teachers in evaluating their philosophy of teaching and learning, and their effectiveness as teachers. Seven teachers participated in this study. The teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn more about educational topics and to work with colleagues in designing effective teaching strategies in a format that promoted trust, collegiality, and collaboration. The study focused on such topics as Guided Reading, reading and writing strategies, and methods to improve sustained reading among students. Analysis of the data revealed that study group sessions encouraged teachers to reflect on current teaching practices and supported any necessary adjustments to better serve the needs of their students. Data findings suggested that study groups, as a professional development initiative, can foster a structure that promotes collaboration, collegiality, and meaningful change in teaching practices.