IMPROVING TEACHING QUALITY: PROMOTING A DYNAMIC APPROACH TO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This presentation draws on teacher effectiveness research to consider implications for teacher professional development. The first part provides a review of research on teacher professional development and illustrates the limitations of the main approaches to teacher development. It is argued that not only reflection and understanding of practice should be encouraged but also research on teacher effectiveness should be taken into account. Thus, the second part of this presentation provides a critical review of research on teacher effectiveness. The major findings of this field of research are analysed. It is argued that teacher factors are presented as being in opposition to one another and that the whole process of searching for teacher factors had no significant impact upon teacher professional development. In this context, the dynamic model of educational effectiveness that attempts to establish stronger links between research and improvement of practice has been developed. Studies investigating the validity of this model and especially its attempt to identify relations among teacher factors reveal that teaching skills can be grouped into stages of effective teaching. These distinct stages move gradually from skills associated with direct teaching to more advanced skills concerned with new teaching approaches and differentiation of teaching. Teachers exercising more advanced types of teacher behavior have better student outcomes. Thus, it is advocated that teacher professional development should be focused on how to address groupings of specific teacher factors associated with student learning and on how to help teachers improve their teaching skills. The main characteristics of this approach, which we call *dynamic integrated approach* to teacher professional development, are analyzed and experimental studies supporting its use for improvement purposes are presented. Finally, suggestions for broadening the scope of this approach and for research investigating its impact on promoting quality of education are presented.