Chapter 105

ABCs and PCs: Effective Professional Development in Early Childhood Education

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ABSTRACT

Effective professional development holds the power to transform teaching practices that invigorate teachers and increase student engagement. Arizona Classrooms of Tomorrow Today (AZCOTT) was one such experience. Eighteen elementary teachers completed a yearlong, rigorous, sixty-hour workshop experience that focused on integrating technology in content area instruction. Participants integrated technology effectively, began to develop leadership skills, and experienced changes in attitude, beliefs, knowledge, and skills as technology influenced existing curricula.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Two successful models emerged in a review of the literature that build on the possibilities of transformation: Intel Teach to the Future and the Apple Classroom of Tomorrow (ACOT) project. The goal of the Intel program is to help teachers already familiar with technology to integrate those skills more effectively in the curriculum to enhance student learning (Kanaya, Light, & Culp, 2005). The ACOT project is a ten-year study of the impact of an infusion of technological resources and sustained professional development on teaching and learning (Sandholtz, Ringstaff & Dwyer, 1997). ACOT is student centered, driven by an essential question, encompasses the use of technology by teachers and students, and culminates in a student-created project. Key elements of effective programs structure both: format, duration, collective participation, inclusiveness, incentives, active learning opportunities, content focus, and coherence (SRI International, 2002). AZCOTT grew from those past successes and elements of the work of Wetzel, Zambo and Padgett (2001).
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