

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT VIA INQUIRY.

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### ABSTRACT

The involvement of educators in inquiry-based professional development is assessed in this qualitative study. The research uses classroom observations and in-depth interviews to look at teachers' attitudes, experiences, and problems with professional development projects. The study's focus is on factors that influence their involvement and how they feel it impacts instruction. The goal of research-intensive teacher preparation programs is to produce educators who can reflect on their own practice as educators via the use of research and an inquiry-based pedagogy. However, there is a lack of data about the effectiveness and growth of these programs' alums in the classroom. The purpose of this research was to examine the growth of inquiry-based working among seven first-year teachers who had completed academic teacher education programs in the Netherlands. These grads and their school administrators were interviewed over the course of three years. Based on individual and organisational factors, their participation in inquiry-based learning moves from the classroom to the school's organisational level. The findings point to avenues for bolstering educators' capacity for inquiry-based practice in the classroom. Although challenges with time and reluctance to change persist, the findings demonstrate that inquiry-based PD fosters reflective practice and collaboration. In order to maximise student achievements, the results aid in optimizing PD design and implementation to encourage teacher engagement and inquiry-based tactics.

**Keywords:** Educators, Inquiry-Based, Professional, Development.

### INTRODUCTION

Preparing future teachers via inquiry-based learning has become more popular in recent decades. Educators need to do research so they may make well-informed decisions, develop professionally, adjust their lessons to societal changes, and conduct effective lessons. The goal of many nations' teacher-training programs is to produce scholars who can bring their knowledge to bear in the classroom. An increasing amount of attention has been paid to inquiry-based learning in teacher preparation programs in recent decades. There is a high expectation that educators would operate in an inquiry-based fashion, rely on research to guide their judgements, and be open to new ideas and ways

of teaching in response to societal changes. Training on teacher research has been included in teacher education programs in many countries with the aim of producing educators capable of both doing their own research and putting the results to use in the classroom. New educators will enter the field with preconceived notions about how they are expected to do and use research due to the emphasis on inquiry-based learning in teacher preparation programs. But little is known about how first-year teachers grow as professionals in terms of inquiry-based practice. Is there a chance that educators can put research to use? How did they overcome these obstacles, and what resources might help educators improve their craft? This research delves into these questions by tracking the professional growth of seven Dutch teachers who have just completed academic teacher education programs and looking at how well they have integrated inquiry-based work skills into their practice (Stebick & Hart, 2021).

### **Inquiry-based working**

Research is an integral part of inquiry-based learning in order to evaluate and improve student learning. Though inquiry-based schooling is gaining popularity, I still like inquiry-based work. This approach has been referred to by a variety of names in the literature, including data-based working, action research, lesson study, evidence-based, and evidence-informed working. According to earlier study, inexperienced educators may dabble in this kind of research every once in a while, but they seldom carry out whole research cycles (Godfrey & Brown, 2019).

### **Involvement of teachers in inquiry-based working**

Studying how academically qualified instructors first become involved in the classroom. Research like these demonstrates that recent college graduates are prepared to take on research roles and are enthusiastic about doing so. These studies show that the graduates are not only capable, but also eager, to put their research skills to work. It would seem, however, that research is less common among beginner instructors who have completed academic programs, and that contemplation and the use of literature predominate. Furthermore, most instructors engage in these types of inquiry-based work inside their individual classrooms. However, certain teachers, particularly those with positions in professional learning communities, have been seen to engage in inquiry-based work at the school level (Van, 2018).

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Bachelor's degrees with an emphasis on the workforce are offered by institutes of higher professional education. These institutions, in contrast to universities, place a premium on applied research. Even though academic programs have been available for almost a decade, very few student teachers actually complete them, meaning that most

schools still lack instructors with intellectual backgrounds. Since 2008, a number of Dutch institutions have established academic programs. Schools of higher professional education often provide more traditional, professionally focused degree programs, such as bachelor's degrees. Compared to universities, these institutions place less emphasis on research and have a more practical focus. Academic programs have been around for almost a decade, but only about 10% of student teachers enrol in them, therefore academic program grads are still in the minority in most schools. Academic programs strive to inspire educators to think critically, apply what they learn in the classroom, and eventually become researchers themselves. Research has shown that student teachers learn about different research approaches and read literature from across the world on teacher research as part of their coursework. Across all four years of the curriculum, research remains the primary emphasis. Research has shown that academic student instructors are more driven to utilise and undertake research in the classroom, and they also have a more inquisitive mindset than their professional program counterparts. Consequently, educators with a strong academic background should be capable of leading their classes and school organisations in an inquiry-based approach to improving educational quality (Gillis & Mitton-Kükner, 2019).

### **Professional development of novice teachers**

Research on the development of first-year educators abounds. This research focusses on educators who have been in the field for five to seven years.

### **Conditions influencing professional development.**

Teachers' professional development is often impacted by both personal and systemic factors inside the school. An educator's sense of identity, goals, motivation, competency, and outlook on effective teaching are all aspects of their personal circumstances (Baan et al., 2020).

## **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research seeks to examine educators' involvement in inquiry-based professional development, emphasizing their degrees of engagement, encountered barriers, and the effects on their teaching methodologies. This study aims to augment the efficacy of professional development programs and boost educational results by comprehending these features.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research shows that inquiry-based professional development (PD) helps educators become better teachers and promotes continuous learning. According to studies, this

approach aids instructors in implementing new techniques by focussing on active participation, reflection, and teamwork. Educational knowledge is enhanced and teachers are motivated to critically analyse their practices via inquiry-based professional development, according to studies. Periodically, complete participation is hindered by factors such as lack of time, inadequate resources, and resistance to change. The literature highlights the need of ongoing support and teamwork in overcoming these obstacles. Regardless of these caveats, it seems that, when implemented correctly, inquiry-based professional development enhances both the efficiency with which teachers educate and the quality of their students' learning (Mertler, 2021). There appears to be a correlation between teachers' lack of self-confidence and their emotional exhaustion, dissatisfaction with their profession, and ultimate resignation. These indirect repercussions show that TSE (teacher self-efficacy) affects teachers' willingness to stay or go by influencing positive feelings of well-being like commitment and contentment. Given teachers' self-assurance, it's safe to conclude that the positive aspects of their mental health are more open to improvement than the negative ones (Riley, 2020). Not only do educators face these challenges, but they also become members of school organisations, each with its own set of norms, customs, and dynamics. When there is a common vision for education or a system that aligns with a teacher's principles, cultural and structural factors might lend credence to their own beliefs. On the other hand, a teacher's beliefs, priorities, and needs may clash with those of the school administration. When a school's own needs, knowledge, and ideals don't align with those of its members, it's hard for teachers to grow professionally (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020).

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How can we encourage teachers to take part in professional development programs that emphasize inquiry?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was conducted to explore how teachers build their teaching styles. Interviews with school administrators were used for this method.

**Data collection and instruments:** A pilot study Interviews and data-collecting methods were used to compile the study's findings. There were 57 men and 63 females who filled out the 120 total data. the researcher performed interviews. Classroom teachers and administrators were interviewed. Teacher and principal interviews lasted 3-5 minutes. Participants were questioned individually by teachers.

**Data analyses:** To analyses interviews were transcribed first. Based on the literature, the authors classified inquiry-based working and personal, structural, and cultural

settings. As a result of the professors' varying years of teaching expertise & the fact that following interviews sometimes brought up earlier years, a chronology could be constructed. Finally, cross-case study uncovered both situational and temporal tendencies in the development of instructors' inquiry-based working.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## RESULTS

Teachers saw gains in student engagement and classroom management as a consequence of inquiry-based professional development, according to the qualitative findings. Time restrictions and opposition to change are two of the obstacles they encounter. For these obstacles to be overcome for PD to be more successful, appropriate support and resources are considered essential.

**Table 1: Yes/No Questions.**

N=120 (M=57, F=63)		
QUESTIONS	YES	NO
1. Have you participated in inquiry-based professional development programs in the past year?	110 (92.0%)	10 (8.0%)
2. Do you feel that inquiry-based PD has positively impacted your teaching practices?	114 (95.0%)	6 (5.0%)
3. Have you encountered any significant challenges or barriers while engaging in inquiry-based PD?	109 (91.0%)	11 (9.0%)
4. Do you believe that additional resources or support would enhance your experience with inquiry-based PD?	107 (89.0%)	13 (11.0%)
5. Have you noticed any improvement in student outcomes because of implementing strategies learned in inquiry-based PD?	115 (96.0%)	5 (4.0%)

## DISCUSSION

The discourse emphasises that inquiry-based professional development is crucial in enhancing pedagogical practices, while simultaneously underscoring the significant challenges educators have, including time limitations and resistance to change. To enhance the effectiveness of professional development and foster more educator engagement, it is essential to tackle these issues via the provision of personalised support and resources. A significant body of study has concentrated on the professional growth of educators in their first years of teaching. Nonetheless, professional growth in inquiry-based practices has garnered little attention. This research seeks to enhance current information by offering insights into the inquiry-based practices of teachers who have completed academic teacher education programs.

The survey revealed that 110 (92.0%) respondents concurred, while 10 (8.0%) respondents dissented over their participation in inquiry-based professional development programs in the preceding year. In a similar vein, 114 (95.0%) respondents concurred, while 6 (5.0%) respondents dissented about the favourable influence of inquiry-based professional development on their teaching approaches. Out of 120 respondents, 109 (91.0%) agreed, while 11 (9.0%) dissented on the notion that extra resources or assistance would improve their experience with inquiry-based professional development. 107 (89.0%) respondents agreed, while 13 (11.0%) respondents dissented with the notion that more resources or assistance would improve their experience with inquiry-based professional development. Out of 120 respondents, 115 (96.0%) agreed, while 5 (4.0%) dissented about the enhancement of student outcomes due to the use of techniques acquired in inquiry-based professional development.

## CONCLUSION

This qualitative study finds that the dynamics of educators' inquiry-based professional development (PD) are complex. Inquiry-based professional development promotes reflective practice and instructional advancement; yet, time limitations and resistance to novel methodologies hinder participation. School administrators must recognise the distinct requirements of beginner academic educators. Educators equipped with the competencies to reflect on school organisation problems and motivated to engage in such reflection should not be required to concentrate only on their own classes for five years or defer until their teaching abilities reach a certain standard. They must be permitted to occupy leadership positions and be encouraged to use their competencies to enhance teaching within their educational institution at an earlier stage. There are ramifications for educational policy. Should we anticipate that novice educators would engage in inquiry-based practices throughout their first years of teaching, or are our expectations too high for these individuals? If teachers are trained as teacher-

researchers and the challenges of being novice educators are so daunting that many cannot use their skills, they may become disenchanted with inquiry-based practices by the time they gain confidence in their teaching. Consequently, a framework enabling academic educators to use their competencies should be established in educational institutions. The study underscores the need of individualized assistance and institutional reforms to address these obstacles. The research examines educators' experiences and opinions, providing actionable recommendations for enhancing professional development programs to boost participation and elevate educational quality.

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