

Effects of Collaborative Lesson Planning on Teacher Learning in the Practicum

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Abstract

Planning, designing and reflecting are at the core of teaching competency (Terhart, 2000). This investigation researches the impact of an innovation in the practical training of student teachers at a Swiss college for teacher education. As part of an experimental trial, student teachers were supported by their cooperating teachers in new ways through collaborative lesson planning, based on the model of Content-Focused CoachingSM (West & Staub, 2003). The main question addressed is whether the newly introduced element of collaborative lesson planning had an effect on the professional learning of student teachers as perceived by student teachers and cooperating teachers. On the basis of a quasi-experimental design, each student teacher (N=26) was assigned to at least one training lesson in each of the following three conditions: with collaborative lesson planning, without, and listening to the lesson planning of a fellow student. By means of questionnaires student teachers and cooperating teachers (N=10) assessed the learning for each practicum session. Results show that student teachers as well as cooperating teachers rated learning from cooperative planning to be helpful to very helpful. In contrast, student teachers' listening to lesson planning as bystanders only was perceived to be significantly less helpful. Learning from collaborative lesson planning was perceived to be more helpful than learning from reflection on the lesson. When students did not participate in any collaborative planning, they assessed learning from the teaching of a lesson to be more helpful than learning from reflection on their lesson. Furthermore, the assessment of instructional quality of the lessons by cooperating teachers showed that the quality of lessons assisted with planning were rated significantly better than lessons without collaborative planning. The presentation will discuss the evidence for the fruitfulness of collaborative lesson planning for teacher learning, as called for in the model of Content-Focused Coaching.