

Continuing Professional Development in South African Schools: Staff Perceptions and the Role of Principals

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ABSTRACT Changes in education depend on the quality of teachers. As a result, the Professional Development (PD) of teachers has become increasingly important for school improvement initiatives. To address the challenges in the South African education system, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (Republic of South Africa 2007) was instituted to assist in the provision of qualified teachers. The perceptions of staff and the role of leadership in the professional development of staff in South African schools? The inquiry discussed in this article was qualitative within specially selected schools. The following major findings emerged from the data analysis: (1) Overall view of professional development in the South African education system; (2) Experiences of official PD programmes: "A waffle, waffle waffle" versus being "excited"; (3) "Programmes should lead to a paradigm shift in teachers"; and (4) The key role of the principal in professional development: "plant and plough" in teachers.