

The Professional Development of EFL Teachers Through Guided Academic Discussions

¹Saman Koushesh, ² Dr. Parviz Ahmadi

¹Education Directorate of Marivan, Iran

² Farhangian University, Sanandaj

Abstract

This study investigated how four EFL teachers engaged in a series of academic and professional discussions guided by a supervisor of an English Language Center over two subsequent semesters and how the collegial interactions nurtured their professional teaching knowledge and identity. The primary research tools used in this qualitative collective case study were individual interviews and group discussions. The interviews and group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed in verbatim and then the data were analyzed for any theme emerging from the interviews or discussions. Their awareness of pedagogical challenges was raised and they addressed their learners' needs and learning strategies in real classroom settings more effectively. The participants shared their personal practical experiences and also scaffolded their colleagues over the pedagogical challenges. Also, the engagement of the participant teachers in academic discourse socialization made them reconsider their pedagogical beliefs and practices. More importantly, the participants reconstructed and developed a relative expert identity as well as a critical identity over the status quo of their current EFL context. A number of implications for professional development of EFL teachers may arise from this qualitative collective case study. Peer counselling services, skill-training under guided supervision, or any other form of support and scaffolding which provide motives for professional development should be encouraging.

Keywords: discourse, identity, professional development, scaffolding, socialization