

Professional Learning Communities in Mathematics

Prof Karin Brodie

In this presentation, I will describe the rationale for and research findings from a teacher development project in Johannesburg that worked with professional learning communities among high school mathematics teachers. The main focus of the project was to support teachers to understand the reasoning behind their learners' mathematical errors and to develop stronger understandings of learners' thinking, and to develop their own content and pedagogical content knowledge and their practice. The research analyses looked at teacher conversations in the communities and the teachers' practices over time. We found that the content of the community conversations was related to the activities, and there were shifts in teachers' conversations across time and activities. There were shifts in practices for about half of the teachers in the direction of responsiveness towards learners, with nuances among teachers and communities. I will relate the findings to the contextual climate in relation to teacher professionalism and the possibilities for professional learning in communities.