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Professional Identity or Best Practices?—An Exploration of the Synergies between Professional Learning Communities and Communities of Practices

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to find the synergies between Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Community of Practice (CoP), with the view to enhance teacher professionalism. Based on the review of literatures, we highlight the different motivations of PLCs and CoPs, and the value-assumptions informing the two initiatives. We argue that both initiatives serve critical functions in augmenting teacher autonomy. Although conceptually distinctive, the underpinning values of the approaches to organizing teacher professional communities are complementary. Therefore, a two-prong approach is proposed. One seeds teacher professionalism through emergent best practices. The other consolidates these best practices into a coherent teacher professional identity through the introduction of structural affordances.

KEYWORDS

Communities of Practice; Professional Learning Community; Teacher Professionalism; Professional Identity/Autonomy; Best Practices

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