

# Ensuring Effective Impact of Continuing Professional Development: Saudi Science Teachers' Perspective

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Many researchers critique that continuing professional development programs in Saudi Arabia are neither well organized nor are systematic. This study came to assess the impact of CPD opportunities in the country to better suit the professional needs of Saudi science teachers and support them in implementing the reformed instructional practices. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 609 Saudi science teachers by means of closed and open ended questionnaire and later interviews with 9 teachers. Findings indicated that several Saudi science teachers have benefited from participating in the CPD programs but have also faced several challenges. Further analysis of the data resulted into five major themes; perspectives of participating in CPD, features of distinguished CPD programs, perceptions of ways to improve the impact of CPD, the impact of CPD on classroom practices, and barriers face classroom implementation.

**Keywords:** Saudi Arabia, professional development, science teachers.

## BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is widely accepted that the quality of teaching cannot be improved without improving the quality of teachers (Borko, 2004, Seferoglu, 2001; Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea, & Williams, 1987). A teacher who has opportunities to learn can provide

more opportunities for his students. Therefore, providing teachers with continuous professional development experiences is essential to improve the quality of their teaching (Lindberg, 2011). Matseliso, and Jita (2010) define CPD programs as systematic efforts to bring about change in teachers' classroom practices, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students.

Despite the general consensus on the significance of CPD to the improvement of classroom teaching and learning, several researches pointed to the ineffectiveness of most programs (Guskey, 2000; Luft, 2001; Rhoton, Madrazo, Motz, & Walton, 1999; Wee, Shepardson, Fast, & Harbor, 2007). The characteristics of these CPD programs are well documented in the

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