

Perceptions, Engagement and Productivity of Teacher Professional Development (PD)

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PD initiatives have a broader implication for English as Second Language (ESL) teachers at the Sri Lanka university sector for enhancing their professional growth and students' performance. A qualitative case study was undertaken with ten ESL teachers of a government university of Sri Lanka at identifying their perceptions of engagement during PD sessions and how their perceptions impact on their engagement in PD activities. The study used semi-structured interviews as the research instrument, and Thematic Analysis for recognizing, analyzing and interpreting of data. Participants' reactions and engagement in PD activities during sessions were mostly regulated by contextual factors - relevance to ESL of the content of the session, interest in the session, practitioner-centeredness of the activities, and other contextual aspects - rather than their by perceptions or type of PD. Therefore, participants' level of engagement in PD was heavily dependent on the managerialist and democratic regulations that decide the aims, the content, and the format of PD activities. Findings and recommendations offer a valuable contribution to PD facilitators and policy-makers that would be of help for introducing productive changes to the existing PD activities at all universities in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the recommendations informed by the study would be useful in designing and implementing new PD activities for university ESL teachers. As such, ESL practitioners in the university sector in Sri Lanka would have opportunities to engage in focused and meaningful PD activities that may enrich their knowledge, skills and professionalism.

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