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Abstract

This research focused on the influence of a short professional development course for Geography in-service teachers in environment and sustainability education in secondary schools. To ensure that learners acquire knowledge and skills that promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), teachers need to revisit their thinking and action to transform their classroom practices. This study was conducted to determine if teachers' thinking and action had been changed by participating in a professional development programme. A case study research strategy was used to investigate the influence of the *Fundisa* for Change professional development programme. Five teachers who attended the programme were investigated. Data were generated from analysis of the manual received at the training, as well as from one-on-one semi structured interviews, lesson observations, and scrutiny of the teachers' lesson plans and assessment documents. Data analysed thematically, where themes and codes were generated both inductively and deductively. The analysis revealed that this particular intervention had strengthened participating teachers' content knowledge and the integration of attitudes and values in teaching. However, it was found that the course did little to enhance the participating teachers' pedagogy, assessment practices and use of resources. More importantly, the findings reveal factors that either constrain or enable the implementation of ESD in schools, which can be considered when designing further ESD professional development programmes. The system of the Department of Basic Education such as generic lesson plans and common assessments constrains the implementation of ESD; whilst the integration of values in teaching enables the implementation of ESD. Based on the results, it is recommended that a whole-school approach should be considered in teacher development for ESD. To ensure effective support of teachers in implementing ESD in schools, Department of Basic Education officials must also be capacitated. Further research is needed on learners' knowledge, skills and values as a result of ESD.

Keywords

Education for Sustainable Development; Teacher Professional Development; Short intervention course; Transformative learning; Transformative thinking; Content knowledge; Teaching practices; Assessment practices.