

**BUILDING TECHNOLOGY-BASED,  
LEARNER-CENTERED ENVIRONMENTS:  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN REAL TIME**

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## Acceptance Page

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## **Abstract**

This study examined issues involved with supporting teachers in becoming more learner-centered when implementing computer-based workplace simulations in their classrooms. Specifically, this research effort centered around developing a framework for professional development, implementing the framework, and developing a grounded theory of professional development based on the experiences of the participants.

For this research, a professional development framework was developed based on successful professional development efforts, information on developing learner-centered classrooms, and data about teacher change. The model included five key pieces: reflection, proximal goals, collegial support groups, one-on-one feedback, and support materials for the teachers. The underlying structure for the model acknowledged that change was an individual undertaking that needed to be supported in-context and over time. It also assumed that the reflection would focus on the proximal goals and the other pieces would work in support of those goals.

The study involved the researcher acting as a participant observer in a public school for four months. The experiences of two middle school teachers were the primary focus of the research. The primary data sources included field observations as the teachers used the simulations in their classrooms made by the author as well as three

outside observers and interviews with each teacher following her use of the simulation program.

During the study, the original framework evolved in response to the data collected. The final version of the professional development framework focused on the professional developer working with the teachers to develop their reflective skills. Proximal goals became a focusing tool for reflection only after teachers had begun to develop their reflective skills. As the teachers became more reflective. Further, the findings indicated that proximal goals, themselves, offered a kind of structure that helped guide these teachers through the change process. The interplay between reflection and proximal goals was enhanced by outside resources, one-on-one feedback, and collegial group meetings. Each of these elements proved important for supporting this professional development effort.

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