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Effective professional development for practicing teachers comes in many forms. One promising model is to provide teachers with an “immersion experience” in mathematics: an experience in which participants investigate one area of mathematics in depth. Why should such an experience improve one’s day-to-day teaching practice? In this talk, we will propose several answers to this question, and we will analyze the effects of immersion in mathematics on teaching practice. We will also introduce the other talks in this strand, which will give concrete (and different) examples of how such professional development programs have been implemented. (Received October 02, 2000)