

Chapter 37

YouTube as a Teacher Training Tool: Information and Communication Technology as a Delivery Instrument for Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

High-stakes student testing, accountability for students' outcomes, new educational trends, and revised curricula and standards are only a few of the reasons that teachers must learn to teach complex material with skilled and intentional practices. As a result, professional development for educators is in critical demand. Nevertheless, research in the field of professional development indicates that most teachers do not experience effective teacher training (Desimone et al., 2002; Guskey, 2002). Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to examine one professional development opportunity using the video-sharing tool, YouTube, as a training modality for in-servicing teachers. For this study, the researchers conducted interviews with six teachers currently teaching in Western Pennsylvania to analyze their perceptions about the YouTube teacher training method. The results of the study indicated that the YouTube training tool is a quality training tool to assist teachers in the implementation of higher-order teaching strategies. Additionally, the results indicated that YouTube training videos could reinforce in-person training.

INTRODUCTION

An admirable goal for any teacher is fostering life-long learning for their pupils. Life-long learners look for experiences to broaden their character and knowledge throughout their lifetimes. It

should come as no surprise, then, that in order to create a life-long learner, teachers themselves must provide an example. Even if teachers have no desire to broaden their own learning, the fact of the matter is that they no longer have a choice. High-stakes student testing, accountability for

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students' outcomes, new educational trends, and revised curriculums and standards are only a few of the reasons that teachers must learn to teach complex material with skilled and intentional practices. As a result, professional development for educators is in critical demand. With the development and adoption of the Common Core Standards and increased emphasis on students' development of higher-order thinking skills, the demands for higher-order teaching concepts and strategies, concepts and strategies that foster students' high-order thinking skills, are greater than ever (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

Also, with an increased emphasis on technology to do the "heavy lifting" in delivering content, teachers will need to become more adept in the use of these new technologies. Prensky (2008) described the role of technology as supporting the new teaching paradigm. This paradigm involves students teaching themselves with the support of their teachers. It also places the burden on teachers to both understand and embrace new technologies in their classrooms. Thus, the focus of this study was to examine one professional development opportunity using the video-sharing tool, YouTube, as a training modality to in-service teachers.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Higher-Order Teaching and Professional Development

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010) was created in the wake of No Child Left Behind. Central to this moment is an increased demand for English and content area teachers to develop and improve students' critical thinking and reading skills in accordance with the classroom text (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010; IRA & NCTE, 1999; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009). While teachers are

charged with the task of addressing these rigorous standards, they sadly are left with little direction for how to do so.

Professional development has been documented as a way to improve teacher effectiveness and learner outcomes (Abdal-Haqq, 1996; Borko, 2004; Desimone et al., 2002; Guskey, 2002). However, it does not come without challenges. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 required school districts to grant time for high-quality professional development (NCLB, 2001). Nonetheless, as Borko (2009) pointed out, "NCLB does not, however, address questions such as what constitutes high-quality professional development or how professional development should be made available to teachers" (p. 3). In the past, school districts placed little emphasis on the quality of professional development; however, the changing educational climate and the emphasis on creating lessons that encourage and develop higher-order thinking skills brought professional development to the forefront (Corcoran, 1995). In fact, research continually shows that professional development is a significant factor in the success of teaching and learning in schools (Corcoran, 1995, Desimone et al., 2002; Guskey, 2002; Vrasidas & Glass, 2007). Still, for teacher training to be meaningful and change-provoking, research suggests that professional development must be ongoing and high quality to make a difference in teachers' skills and effectiveness in the classroom (Vrasidas & Glass, 2007; Desimone et al., 2002). Nevertheless, research in the field of professional development consistently yields that most teachers do not experience effective teacher training (Desimone et al., 2002; Gulamhussein, 2013; Guskey, 2002;).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

With the demands of the classroom, teachers may find it difficult to effectively advance their own

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