

Chapter 19

Instructional Videos as ICT for Teacher Professional Development: Transitioning from the Traditional Classroom to YouTube

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ABSTRACT

Information Communication Technologies have had a major impact in education today. Various ICT tools have been used to produce very favorable outcomes in terms of student learning. One such tool is YouTube which has had a dynamic influence on teaching and learning and is widely used by teachers in the classroom. The focus of this study is to examine how teachers would respond to the use of ICT tools, namely YouTube, as a form of delivery for their own staff development training. In this study, we surveyed teachers to assess their feelings on this form of training. Our findings showed a favorable response to this form of training using YouTube and demonstrated a rationale supported by a list of themes related to their rationale for favoring this choice.

INTRODUCTION

The success and growth of online learning at all levels of education has skyrocketed during the digital age due largely to the success and convenience of information and communication technologies. This increased emphasis on technology to do the “heavy lifting” in delivering content at all levels requires teachers to be more adept in the use of these new technologies. Prensky (2008) described the role of technology as supporting the new teaching paradigm, which creates a two-fold responsibility for educators.

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First, this paradigm involves teachers supporting students as they teach themselves. Secondly, it places the burden on teachers to both understand and embrace new technologies in their classrooms. Professional development opportunities are necessary for teachers to succeed in this new teaching paradigm, and as the pattern would follow, teachers likely can benefit from the convenience and accessibility of online learning for themselves.

As a result, in 2014, these researchers explored the use of online learning with practicing teachers as a professional development model. 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 (Copper & Semich, 2014). Based on these results, the researchers revisited the topic to determine on a larger scale how the use of information and communication technology for teacher professional development has developed over time. The researchers took an in-depth look at the phenomenon by surveying approximately 90 pre-k to higher-education educators representing 16 states and all subject areas.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Teacher Professional Development for Teachers

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, 2008). Nonetheless, as Borko (2004) 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; still, 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;).

According to DeMonte (2013), writer for the Center for American Progress, the term “high-quality” can be determined by the success of the professional development to impact the way instruction occurs and, therefore, have a positive effect on students’ learning. Reviewing past studies on professional development in teacher education, DeMonte (2013) identified five characteristics of successful endeavors:

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