

Beginning Physical Education Teachers' Experience of Continuing Professional Development and School-Based Mentoring

Steven Tan Kwang San, Isabella Wong Yuen Fun, Tan Seck Heong and Helen Low

KEY IMPLICATIONS

- Digital recordings of physical education (PE) lessons (with accompanying transcripts) provide an evidence-based record of teachers' instructional performance, effectiveness, and development, and when used in powerful and concrete ways can accelerate teachers' professional learning.
- Exemplar videos that demonstrate pedagogical practices that make explicit what teachers need to do to shape students' learning environment, provide instruction and feedback, and influence student motivation can successfully promote the professional development of teachers and mentors.

BACKGROUND

The Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) introduced the Instructional Mentoring Programme (IMP) to develop instructional mentors to support the development of beginning teachers. Concomitantly, Physical Education and Sports Teacher Academy (PESTA) developed the Physical Education Lesson Observation Tool (PELOT) to promote PE practitioners' pedagogical knowledge and practices. It is envisioned that PESTA could help support AST's IMP initiative by developing its own PE-specific, school-based mentors. Currently there is no available mentoring

framework customised specifically for the local PE fraternity that PESTA can adopt. The present exploratory project sought to contribute to the development of this mentoring framework with the design, development, and implementation of effective and transformative professional development. Our fundamental idea is that the use of video-based instructional evidence and pedagogical practice exemplars can help beginning teachers and mentors focus on and improve particular aspects of their teaching and mentoring practices over time.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The objectives of this project is twofold:

- To further develop the teaching competencies of beginning physical education teachers (BPETs) through continuing professional development and school-based mentoring, with the use of PELOT, and
- To enhance the mentoring capabilities of experienced PE teachers providing the school-based mentoring and support for BPETs.

KEY FINDINGS

Both the BPETs and their mentors acknowledged that the digital lesson recordings were powerful means of facilitating critical

reflections, further evaluation, and collaborative dialogue between them based on observable evidence rather than on personal experiences and opinions.

The use of the PELOT document with the accompanying pedagogical practices video exemplars provided the BPETs and their mentors with clear representations and made explicit what the characteristics for each practice meant. This allowed them to level up their existing craft knowledge and understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of their practices.

Therefore, the BPETs were able to further develop their teaching competencies, with the assistance of their mentors. Experienced teachers' mentoring practices were also enhanced as the dyads were able to be involved in more productive and detailed collaborative discussions, as they analysed the evidence from the digital lesson recordings and relied on PELOT's common language and pedagogical practices' characteristics to frame their communications.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

Implications for Practice

The "affordances" of video use in professional development suggest that schools can provide adequate

video technology to make it easier for teachers to collect digital lesson records as evidence for use during video-enhanced mentoring. Observation and evidence are significant and critical elements in promoting the development of pedagogical practices and the work of mentoring, and in supporting professional development with organised peer learning communities.

PARTICIPANTS

- Number of primary school teachers: 6
- Number of secondary school teachers: 8

RESEARCH DESIGN

BPETs and their school-based mentors were provided with continuing professional development (CPD) over a one-year period consisting of workshops and school visits. All PE lessons and mentoring sessions were digitally recorded with transcripts provided for teachers' observation, analysis and self-reflections. Throughout the CPD, the teachers were provided with feedback regarding their learning and development. Prior to the CPD, baseline data on teachers' pedagogical and mentoring practices were gathered and used for goal setting and comparison to support and extend teacher learning.

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This brief was based on the project AFD 04/14 TKS: Beginning Physical Education Teachers' Experience of Continuing Professional Development and School-Based Mentoring.

How to cite this publication

Tan, K.S.S., Wong, Y.F.I., Tan, S.H., & Low, K.F.H. (2018). *Beginning Physical Education Teachers' Experience of Continuing Professional Development and School-Based Mentoring*. (NIE Research Brief Series No. 18-026). Singapore: National Institute of Education.

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