

Towards Responsive Professional Development for Singapore Music Teachers

Phase 3: Investigating Efficacy of Video-Based Professional Development

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KEY IMPLICATIONS

- Video-based Professional Development (PD) impacts music teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) positively. There could also be greater legitimacy accorded to online learning and acknowledgement of participants' time taken for online learning. Greater investments in the design and administration of video-based PD platforms can contribute to transforming the professional knowledge of the teaching fraternity.
- Findings revealed a critical need for agency on the participants' part for successful PD with online learning. PD providers should therefore understand specific learning needs of participants and engender a sense of agency in the curriculum design for online learning.
- Content, Context, Connect and Convenience emerged as four themes that may serve as a useful conceptual framework in future video-based PD, giving greater access to professional learning and empowering participants.

BACKGROUND

This Ministry of Education (MOE)-contracted research project is a continuation from three prior projects within the programme, "Towards Responsive Professional Development for Singapore Music Teachers."

Phases 0 and 1 found that both music specialists and generalists highly value life and video-mediated peer observation as forms of professional learning. In Phase 2, 150 short video clips were produced that illustrated ways in which the music syllabus could be taught while enacting student-centric principles.

FOCUS OF STUDY

Using the video clips produced in Phase 2, this present Phase 3 project aimed to examine how video-based PD could be effective in fostering the music PCK of Primary and Secondary music teachers. In particular, it investigated the impact of video-based PD prototypes (delivered by the Singapore Teachers Academy for the aRts-STAR) to identify ways to further enhance their effectiveness in future iterations.

KEY FINDINGS

Participants generally expressed that the video-based PD prototypes have impacted their PCK positively. They also indicated high levels of satisfaction on the whole through self-report questionnaires and qualitative interviews. Five broad categories of improvement are recommended: (1) improving features of the online platform; (2) further enhancing the variety of the videos; (3) making opportunities for face to face interaction; (4) encouraging more active participation from the PD participants; and (5) making resources available for music teachers.

Other than course-related factors, it was also found that participants' individual dispositions are crucial: those who report higher overall motivation and self-directedness towards their online learning also participated more actively and are more satisfied with their learning, suggesting a critical need for agency on the participants' part for successful PD.

Content, Context, Connect and Convenience have emerged as four salient themes related to participants' experiences in the online video-mediated PD.

- “Content” refers to the videos used in the PD as well as the forum postings made by fellow participants and the facilitator, which have been described as “useful.”
- “Context” refers to how the videos are specific to the Singapore music classroom, as well as how the videos are situated in the context of the PD tasks. The fact that the videos are based on actual Singaporean classroom contexts achieved greater buy-in from participants. The questions that accompanied the videos in the online platform stimulated reflection and drew responses for participants' learning.

- “Connect” refers to the opportunity for participants to communicate and share ideas with other teachers in the local fraternity. Importantly, the design of the online PD which encourages open-ended responses (rather than just direct instructions) allows teachers to connect with one another beyond physical and time constraints.
- “Convenience” refers to how participants are able to engage in PD anytime, anywhere. Furthermore, the videos can be revisited/downloaded multiple times.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

Implications for practice

The four themes above may serve as a practical guide for designers of PD courses:

- What is the *content* of the PD that would be useful for participants?
- How might the PD best reflect the *context* that is relevant to participants?
- How might the PD enable participants to *connect* with one another more effectively?
- How might PD be rendered more *convenient* for participants?

Implications for policy and research

This project supports MOE policy initiatives by providing findings that may help online PD which are areas of growing interest. Importantly, it guides STAR in offering findings that are directly related to its own video-mediated PD prototypes. The overall high levels of satisfaction, positive impact and applicability reported affirm STAR that these video-mediated PD prototypes have started off in the right direction.

PARTICIPANTS

There were 65 PD participants at STAR.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Sixty-five music teachers participated in video-mediated PD that was administered by STAR. One of the Co-PIs of the research team, a Master Teacher at STAR, led the design, implementation and facilitation of the online PDs. Five PD Prototypes were mounted. Data collection comprised surveys (self-report questionnaires), participants' postings on the online forums (online discussions), interviews and classroom observations.

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