

Professional learning through classroom videos and researcher-practitioner collaboration

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The aim of this paper is to give an account of two professional learning courses, involving two groups of Icelandic lower secondary teachers (15 participants in total), and present the preliminary results of an investigation of how a researcher-practitioner collaboration, built on the use of classroom videos can generate effective forms of collaborative professional learning to improve teaching quality.

Both courses were designed as university courses, credited to 5 ECTS, organised as three online sessions. The first session involved an introduction of the PLATO protocol, after which participants' identified an area for improvement of their teaching, and planned a small scale action research project in collaboration with colleagues, with consultation from the researchers/course organisers. Each project was required to include classroom video recordings and the collaborative reviewing of the videos. To conclude the course the participants presented their development projects at an open on-line seminar.

The data used for the inquiry presented here was mainly participants written reflective accounts from the first course (n = 9), and evaluative reports from the second (n = 6). Other available data is participants' action plans, their reflective logs, minutes from participants'-researchers' meetings, and video recordings of the on-line presentations. The reflective accounts and evaluation reports were read and assessed by the researchers and thematic analysis was applied to identify main themes arising from them.

The thematic analysis generated three main themes: 1) course organisation, 2)

the professional learning tools, and 3) the outcomes of the professional learning. The analysis revealed generally positive views towards the organisation of the courses. The participants particularly appreciated the collaboration and feedback from researchers and thought the open seminar was a challenging, but an exciting and meaningful event. As regards the professional learning tools the participants welcomed PLATO as a basis for their discussion and reflection about teaching and regarded the videos and the collaborative analysis of them as a valuable opportunity to analyse themselves as teachers and their students at work. Four main outcomes of professional learning were identified as: a) more consciousness of the quality of teaching and aspects of effective teaching (deriving from PLATO), b) increased empowerment and clarity of teaching conceptions and enhanced professional strength, c) awareness of students' experiences and reactions, and d) the importance of collaborative reflection on teaching.

The courses were built on the QUINT ambition of improving teaching, using classroom videos as an important tool for professional learning. The background to their organisation and emphases, is definitions of professional learning and development as a collaborative, job embedded enterprise, taking place in a professional learning community, primarily aiming at improving the quality of education and educational outcomes. Another facet of their background is the idea of empowering teachers and giving them the agency to become able researchers of their own practice, to notice and react effectively to the needs of their students.