Discussing teaching videocases online: Perspectives of preservice and inservice EFL teachers
M.H. Liu
Tunghai University, Taiwan

This paper reports online videocase discussions among preservice and inservice teachers at various EFL (English as a foreign language) school contexts. The rich potential of videocases as a powerful tool for connecting theory with practice in teacher education has been highlighted in the literature (e.g., Borko, Jacobs, Eiteljorg, & Pittman, 2008; Brophy, 2004). As Borko et al. (2008) argued, applying videocases to teacher professional development "helps teachers to systematically investigate critical elements of the professional development experience, and to probe into the nature and evolution of teaching and learning" (p. 418). With the advent of digital technology there is a burgeoning interest in promoting online videocase discussion (e.g., Fishman, 2004; Koc, Peker, & Osmanoglu, 2009), yet research on the effectiveness of such a media in supporting teacher learning or influencing teachers' practices is still in its infancy (Boling, 2007; Koc et al., 2009). Furthermore, few researchers sought to involve both preservice and inservice teachers in the same online learning community (Koc et al., 2009).

Aligned with this new approach of online teacher education, this study was designed to fill in the literature gap by involving preservice and inservice teachers in a videocase discussion community built on the Moodle platform. Relying on the theoretical framework of situative perspective of teacher learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Putnam & Borko, 2000), this qualitative study employed triangulations to investigate teacher reflection and discussion discourse around online teaching videos. Various participants involved 21 preservice teachers, 7 inservice teachers, and 4 university faculty. Multiple data collection methods included teaching videos, online discussion messages, open-ended surveys, interviews, and journals. The data collected were analyzed by NVivo 8.0 for Windows and open/axial coding techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to organize groups of data in particular themes or issues being investigated.

The findings revealed the professional development experience and online learning issues various participants perceived in this virtual community. As shown in the data analysis, situative perspective of teacher learning fostered most participants to "draw upon and incorporate each other’s expertise to create rich conversations and new insights into teaching and learning" (Putnam & Borko, 2000, p. 8) when they were involved in the community recruiting teachers with different types of knowledge and expertise. Yet, several concerns or difficulties appeared to hinder 40% ~ 50% participants in individual groups from frequently involving themselves in the online videocase discussions (see the summary below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns or Difficulties</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Inservice Teachers</th>
<th>University Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online stage fright when watching his/her own videocases</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited experience in discussing videocases online</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identity as online learners</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lags between watching videos and giving comments</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The example of EFL teachers’ online videocase learning experience provided evidence and pedagogical implications for applying learning technologies to teacher education in the future. Based on the limitations of this study, research suggestions were offered to further codify and document the complexities of online teacher development in various contexts.

References


Keywords: Online Teaching Videocases, Online Discussion Community, Online Teacher Professional Development