Title: The effectiveness of using digital video in pre-service and in-service teacher training in Cambodia

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PhD Research: ESoE
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Research Problem:
Using Digital Video in primary school teachers’ professional development in Cambodia.

Summary:
In this dissertation, a video intervention with cooperative learning activities was investigated to increase understanding about what contributes to effective (student) teachers’ professional development in Cambodia’s primary education. The overall research question was, ‘What is the effect of a collaborative professional development activity using video footage with subsequent discussion on the professional development of Cambodian teachers in preservice and in-service teacher education, specifically with respect to the implementation of student-centred teaching behaviour?’

The aim of the video intervention was to promote student-centred teaching methods (SCM) and was developed by the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. It consisted of three model videos each with three lessons in the school subject areas of Khmer, Math and Social Sciences, and accompanying viewing guidelines. Model videos are videos that show other teachers’ good practices or examples of desired strategies of SCM. It was unknown whether a cooperative video intervention was also suitable for non-Western countries with a different cultural and historical context, such as Cambodia. Cambodian traditional pedagogy relies heavily on rote teaching and learning. Furthermore, indications for a large power distance (e.g. accepting differences in power) and a high uncertainty avoidance, as well as a high collectivism (e.g. favouring the group above the individual) are characteristics of Cambodian society and might affect the process and effectiveness of an intervention or professional development activity in the education context. Finally, as a result of the civil war (1975-1979) the Cambodian teaching force was diminished, and is still under development.

The dissertation studied two contexts, namely initial and in-service teacher education. In initial teacher education, an intervention study with 124 student teachers compared a condition in which student teachers observed the model video with viewing guidelines, and a control condition following the regular initial teacher education program. After the intervention, the intervention group reported higher perceived knowledge about SCM, more positive attitudes and higher self-efficacy beliefs compared to the control group. The first in-service part study presented results from a study which used a 2x2 design, varying group conditions (team versus pair) and relevance of the material (model video versus action video) for 21 teachers. Findings indicated that using video had led to an increase in teachers’ perceived knowledge of student-centred teaching, especially for the team/model video combination. The second in-service part-study investigated interactions of seven Cambodian teachers in this team/model combination. Focus of the conversation, conversational acts, individual teacher
contributions and the role of the facilitator were investigated, combined with noticeable change for these items over time. Findings were that teachers focussed mainly on teacher behaviour with no change over time, that over time, less opinionated conversational acts were observed and that the discussions were mainly triggered by the combination of the footage (video) and the questions the facilitator asked. In the third in-service part-study, a case study provided a full portrait of a ‘best case scenario’ teacher (best condition, best results, richest data and best input in frequency and quality). Outcomes showed that teacher change was visible within domains and between domains of change of the Interconnected Model of Teacher Change and usually passed through the personal domain. To initiate sequences between several domains the model video and the facilitator comments were most important for the studied teacher.

Combining findings of all four part studies, this dissertation showed that using video in (initial) teacher training was a promising way to help these Cambodian (student) teachers to better understand SCM. These indications were found even though the intervention was not completely implemented as foreseen by the developers. Similar findings to other countries using video in teacher education were found. Furthermore, this dissertation had a theoretical contribution by combining different theoretical models and theories all focussing on different aspects of using video. The combination of theoretical models and theories added an extra value to this research, which led to an understanding of the effects of the intervention, and what teacher change could possibly look like. Another added value is methodological. The combination of the different methods, namely self-report, interaction analysis and classroom observations gave the researcher the opportunity to understand Cambodian teachers’ professional development in a way that has never been done before.