

TITLE

Professional development in the global classroom

KEY CONCEPTS

Geography, shared resources and simulations, blended learning, co-creation, professional development, virtual classroom

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Technology allows educational activities to be conducted on a much larger scale than individual classroom. This affords opportunities for large scale, learner-led inquiries into complex phenomena, as well as an opportunity for teachers to develop their skills in working across national boundaries and coordinating activity on a large scale. This carries further benefits in reducing teacher workload and gaining economies of scale.

Maria is a geography teacher who is keen to find new ways of exciting students' interest whilst also developing her professional skills and knowledge. Her students find certain topics in geography difficult, so Maria joins an online database of events and simulations related to geography topics. In this database, participating classrooms contribute simulations to the database of resources based on different teachers' and classes' areas of expertise or study.

Maria and her class decide to host an online event about earthquakes and they discuss what form this should take. They elect to host their event in a virtual classroom associated with the database. Maria publishes the event in the database registry, and other teachers and schools express an interest in participating.

The class plans the detailed nature of the activities, the schedule and how other classrooms might participate. It is agreed to have a varied pedagogical approach combining learner-created simulations and inquiry with online expertise from different parts of the world. During the event, classrooms from earthquake-hit areas of Europe are connected with Maria's school and they engage together in simulations and related inquiries. After the simulation, students present their findings online and can feedback or comment on each other's presentations.

TREND/S

Enhanced professional development

There is a trend of increased emphasis on teacher professional development, in which the use of technology plays an important part. For example, technology is used to create collaborative platforms and communities of practice to bring life to the "hard to teach" and "hard to understand" areas of the curriculum, like MST (Mathematics, Science and Technology), thus engaging students with such crucial subjects.

VISION (ASPIRATIONS & AIMS)

- To support teacher professional development

ENVIRONMENT

- Classrooms and virtual classrooms

PEOPLE & ROLES

- Teachers: One teacher becomes lead teacher for a particular topic in an effort to enhance skills and professional development
- Learners: co-creators and assessors of topics
- Experts: participate in certain topics, for scientific input

INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)

- Inquiry based learning
- Experts for scientific input and relaying information
- Peer assessment and feedback
- Learners creating simulations or 'event' material

ACTIVITIES

- Co-creation and sharing of 'hard-to-teach' lessons
- International shared event or experiment or simulation using a virtual classroom environment
- External experts participate giving scientific input
- Shared creation of simulations
- Feedback and responses from other students and teachers based on topics

RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)

- Teachers in different countries with different areas of expertise
- Interactive way for teachers to communicate
- Online database of resources
- Virtual classroom environment
- Simulations/experiments
- Creation tools for simulations/experiments